



INSIDE OUR GATE

By the Author of

"The Colonel's Opera Cloak"





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BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S OPERA CLOAK"



BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1890

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University Press
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE

INSIDE OUR GATE.

I.

FOR a year after we got settled in our own house, we were ministered to by what Allan called a moving procession of poor cooks. I no sooner got used to a cook's name than she went away. I always called the one who was present by the name of her predecessor, and had just decided to use only the generic name of "Cook," when our affairs took a turn for the better.

It makes me laugh now to think of that procession. At first untidiness seemed to be the prevailing fault, but after a while I found a cook who was neat. She was a Norwegian woman, and was determined to do everything after the fashion of Christiania, or not at all. She positively would not give a second rising to the bread. "No, no!" she would say, setting her lips firmly; "good, good! see, good!" and then would look admiringly at the low, heavy loaf. Still, I surely

thought I should be able to teach her. Never was there such a spotless cook ; and she would wash all day in a fresh print dress, with white frill and white apron, and never look even ruffled when the day's work was done.

There was a pot-closet in the shed kitchen, which by reason of old age and low company was hopelessly dingy. Chloride of potash was kept in it, and that only. A broad smile played over Josephine's face when she first peered into it.

"I make it good," she said.

I never went into the kitchen for days afterward to give an order that I was not greeted by a sight of the soles of Josephine's big shoes ; she herself was in the pot-closet, scrubbing. I think she lived in it most of the time. She was an exquisite laundress too. Allan's shirts were a joy to him. If I got discouraged, Allan would say, —

"Oh, I would n't let her go. She'll learn the ways of this country soon, — and those shirts !"

If it had n't been for those shirts, I should have sent her away at the end of a week. Josephine was worth trying to teach, however, for we knew that she was neat, for one thing, and for another, she was glad to live in the country, as few indeed were.

She made friends with an old brindled cat that be-

longed in the barn. She named him Jonas, which she pronounced "Yonas." Josephine and Yonas were inseparable. He was a fierce fighter, and generally had a torn ear, or a piece of fur hanging loose, or limped. Before Josephine came, we had called him "the burglar," from his prowling step and disreputable air ; but now we called him Yonas too. He made the nights hideous with his awful long-drawn howls and heart-rending cries, that suggested a whole orphan asylum of colicky babies. After Josephine adopted him, she used to entice him early in the evening into the shed and shut him up. One evening he escaped her and spent the whole night abroad. In the morning he came into the kitchen with a cat's claw hanging in his ear ; and another day Josephine took one from his eyelid. He idolized Josephine. He sat by the pot-closet with her ; he followed her to the barn and back. But he looked upon the rest of the family as his natural enemies, and would flee when I appeared in the kitchen, or stand still and howl with terror if he saw Allan in the barn.

Josephine had asked me at the intelligence office if there were any Norwegians in town. I had been obliged to say no ; but I had spoken without knowledge, for Allan told me afterward that there was a young Norwegian at the livery stable. I could not

expect the little pot-closet to continue to charm her much longer, and Yonas might prove false. So having determined to teach her, — she was so neat! — I suggested to Allan that the next time he was in the village he should learn whether the Norwegian man was respectable, and if so, ask him to come to see Josephine. The next day I happened to see Mr. Frink, the stable-man, in the street, and asked him about the young man (whose name was Peter Hummel); and told him that my cook would be glad to hear her native tongue, and that I wished he would send Peter to see her. The order boy from the grocery, hearing Josephine's labored English, told her that there was a man who "talked her kind" in town, and Josephine sent him an invitation on her own account.

The very next afternoon Peter appeared, rosy and light-haired, square and lumbering, and knocked at the kitchen door. He was a young fellow of perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five, and Josephine was at least ten years older. He came again the following afternoon about five o'clock, and Josephine took her knitting and sat on the kitchen piazza with him. Before her sat Yonas peacefully washing his face and not even spitting at his rival. The fourth day of their acquaintance was Sunday. Peter came in the afternoon

and escorted Josephine to church, and later we saw them come walking home, hand in hand. Monday night he came again. On Tuesday night Josephine came to me in tears; Peter had not come.

"Why, probably he had some work to do," said I. "He can't come every night, of course."

"Oh, no, there is some matter. I say I want live in city; and he say, 'No, *here*,' and he is sad."

After all my efforts to teach her, she was going back to the city!

"Why does he care where you live?" I asked.

"Oh, he ask to marry me, and I say, 'yas.' Then he say he live here. An' I say no, in city. He not like that. I 'fraid he come no more. If he do come, I live here! Oh, yas, I live here."

"Oh, don't worry!" said I; "if he does n't come to-night, I'll send for him. But," I added, "before you promise to marry him you should first know if he is a good man. You must be careful."

"Oh, I know all," she replied; "I haf ask him. I say to him, 'You good man?' And he say, 'Yas.' 'You love God?' 'Yas.' 'You yoin the church?' He say, 'No, but I likes to yoin it.'"

"But, Josephine," I said, "is n't he very young?"

"Yas," answered Josephine; "but I don't mind young."

I had n't thought of it in that light.

"Yas," continued Josephine, "he young. He stay strong long time and save money."

The next night Peter came. I went into the kitchen about nine o'clock, and there he and Josephine sat, their chairs side by side, straight against the wall, each with a hymn-book, singing piously — and out of tune. Yonas sat on the table and stared solemnly at them with glassy eyes, — overawed, I suppose, by Peter's "meowing."

Not long after that, Josephine caught cold and had a slight cough. Peter was generous, but he wooed with no trifles; he was no silly fellow to waste his money on candies and flowers. And so he forthwith bought and presented Josephine with two flannel undershirts, which she showed me with pride.

"He make good man," she said.

This present certainly was evidence that he was a "good pervider."

One day Josephine and Peter went to the city to have their photographs taken. Josephine presented me with one. There she and Peter stood, facing square to the front, bolt upright, and holding hands. Josephine said they looked rather "stoif;" but I thought that gave the picture the merit of being lifelike. I wish I had a picture of them as they sat that night in

the kitchen, while Yonas stared at them like a witch godmother !

Under Josephine's care Yonas had become a plump, glossy, prosperous-looking cat. One night we heard Josephine's voice at the back door, calling "Yonas ! Yonas ! Yonas !" But no Yonas appeared. The next morning while we were at breakfast, the portly Yonas burst into the dining-room, rushed across the floor, ran straight up the wall, dashed out through the window, and rolled over in a fit. The next morning I saw him sitting on a kitchen chair, thin, bedraggled, and with his eyes crossed : a unique possession is a cross-eyed cat ! After this Yonas looked very sick and wretched. I said he must be drowned. Josephine remarked, —

"I say to Peter he drown Yonas ; but he said, ' No, Yonas always been good to him ! ' "

So I called at the drug-store a mile away, at the other end of the village, and asked as a favor to have a man sent to chloroform Yonas ; but no man appeared. Yonas and his ills passed from my mind.

At dusk one evening I heard the door-bell ring. Josephine went to the door, and a long-continued conversation followed. Fearing that she would perhaps misunderstand some important message, I went to the head of the stairs and listened.

"So you 're sure he won't be in to-night?"

"Yes, I sure. He never in now in the evening."

"Well, what time do you think he will be in?"

"I think breakfast-time or dinner-time."

"I'll call to-morrow then, and —"

"Josephine," I called down, "he will be in in a few moments. He is nearly always in evenings."

I was in my dressing-wrapper. I could n't go down ; so I called over the banisters, "Will you please step into the hall, sir, and take a seat. Mr. Burroughs will be in in a few moments." I always say "moments" when I am vexed ; I generally say "minutes."

The man stepped in.

"'T was the cat I called for, ma'am," he said ; "the girl said he was out and would n't be in till morning. I'm sent by the drug-store to chloroform him."

"Oh !" I said. There was n't anything else to say. I am very glad that "Oh" has been provided for such occasions.

Shortly after this Josephine and Peter were married, and went to live in the city, after all !

I had paid Josephine high wages all the time she was with me, but she had never learned to cook. She was paid chiefly not for cooking, but for consenting to live in the country. My nurse or I had had to carefully oversee her cooking. She was not amiable ; she

was even unamiable. But "she was so neat," we always said. And when we speak of her now we still say, "But she was so neat," as if it were neatness, not charity, that covered every failing.

She came back the next year to show me her baby. His name was Oscar. Little Douglas seriously insisted afterward that she had said it was "Horse-car." He was a big unbleached infant. He looked a good deal like the bread she used to make. He was n't like my babies. I suppose he was a Christiania baby.

The faces of some of our procession of cooks I cannot now call up before my mind, and hardly a name remains to identify certain fading visions.

All I can remember of one is a tale she told me to prove the wickedness and worthlessness of physicians, — indeed, she fairly looked upon them all as pick-pockets and murderers combined, especially the "students at the hospitals." She came to my room, one day, for orders, when I lay in bed with a sick headache ; and standing at the foot-board, she advised me, no matter what befell me, never to let a doctor get inside the door.

"Why, mǎ'am," said she, "me aunt has a young son, me own cousin, and he got tuck in the leg one day, and it wint on gettin' worse and far worse, till

she 'd spint nigh a tay-pot full of money, the doctors a-comin' and a-comin' as if there was n't no place to go to but me aunt's. And at last says one of thim, 'Take him to the hospital,' says he; 'his leg will have to be tuck off.' Me aunt said his leg should niver be tuck off; but he brought another doctor, and they gazed on the leg, and at last says they to me aunt, 'Wud ye rather have a dead son wid two legs, or a livin' son wid one leg?'

"Well, the day come, and off they tuck him for the studients to practize their devices upon; but his mother, says she, 'I 'm a-goin' too.' So whin they gets him undone and laid out on the table, and me aunt has the clo'es he had tuck off under her arm, and the studients tuck out their long knives and began to sharp them, me aunt she began to feel stirred up to the stomick, and the room began to swim round, so says she, 'startin' up quite wild, 'Give me me b'y, ye bloody butchers, a-thirstin' for me Timmy's leg.' And wid that she caught him off the table and just fled away wid him. And there was an old woman livin' in the same court, and says she, 'I can mind Timmy's leg till he can lape like a grasshopper.'

"So she poultiched his leg, and she poultiched his leg for a month continual, and wud ye belave it, ma'am, he 's now that strong and lively that the wake

before I lift me aunt, he jist lep over the house, ma'am, he jist lep over the house? Then I knew Nora Twohig," continued this foe of the doctors, "and she had a thumb that left her no pace day or night. So says the doctor, 'Ye must go to the hospital, and have the studients amputate ye,' says he. So her thumb hurt her so, that at last she jist wint to the hospital, and they tuck her in a room, and they began to sharp up their knives, looking quite cheerful betimes; and whin she beheld all the preparation, she jist put on a most doleful look on her face, and gaspin' as if she were a-dyin'. She sat by the door, and says she, 'Oh, doctor dear, lit me jist step to the door for a brith of frish air; I'm jist stiflin'!' And she flid away and niver wint back again. She says they quite lost track o' her, for though she looked back at iviry corner, they were not a chasin' her. She war scared to go out-doors for siveral days for fear they 'd ketch her. Thin she wint to a drug-store, and says the man to her, 'Ye must poultiche yourself;' and so she did, and whin I see her last time she could hit out as good wid one hand as wid the other."

Once I had spent five days of one week in the intelligence office. Not one woman there of the sort

I wanted would go out of town. I was reckless in the way of wages, but that made no difference. The thrifty, fresh-faced Swedes smiled and shook their heads and bent their knee-joints in curtsies, but they "didn't want to go out city." I expected guests; I must have somebody; I was wearied out. At last the calm, obliging man of the office brought me the only soul who would go out of town.

She was an oldish woman, in a print gown, with a kind voice and pleasant face. I did n't want her; I knew I did n't want her, but I engaged her. At the appointed hour I returned to the office to meet her, almost hoping that she had broken her tryst. Alas! she was there, not in the clean print she had worn, but "got up" in her best clothes, — a draggled bonnet, a velvet dolman, consisting of practically nothing but its name, and a bundle as big as she could carry in both arms, done up in newspaper, from the confines of which odd bits of clothing peered out. I got to the curbstone with her. I paused. I thought I'd give her a dollar and buy her off; but she turned to me and said she "had a feelin' that she was goin' home," with such a pleasant smile, that I could n't do it. Neither could I indorse her as mine. As the horse-car approached, I gave her change and a ticket, and told her to get out at the end of the route and await

me at the steam-car station. Then Douglas and I took the next horse-car that followed.

I did not look at my lady at the station, except for a sly glance when the car was ready to indicate to her that she was to get into it. I sat quite at the other end of the car, knowing that she would keep her eye on me. I talked with my friends. I went out of the car without a glance behind me. She got out too. I told her to walk on till she reached a long light-brown house with a large lawn and trees.

Then I saw Mrs. Dillon, a lady whom I knew but slightly, approaching. She smiled as she met me. "I've just been to call on you," she said. I stopped to express my regrets for my absence. Biddy stopped too, and leaned against the fence, with her vast bundle before her. I motioned to Douglas to go on with her. I laughed; but with tears in my heart I felt as if Biddy were an awful sign to the public of me and my housekeeping. "Don't think my housekeeping is on that scale," said I, pointing to the old woman. I told Mrs. Dillon how I had sat five days in the office, and that this was the only creature who would come out of town in the Fall to my kitchen. I said I did n't want her now I had her. I thought Mrs. Dillon seemed more amused than was polite. She laughed until the tears came into her eyes.

“My dear,” she said, “I brought that very woman out here yesterday, and sent her back this morning. It does seem sometimes as if something — anything — must be better than nothing, does n’t it?”

I gave Bridget a receipt that night for my breakfast rolls.

“But I can’t read, mum,” said she.

“Oh, dear! shall I have to stand and see you measure and weigh everything out?” said I.

“I ’m rale sorry,” she replied. “All me sisters and brothers rade well; I was a giddy thing. Me mother used often to say, ‘Oh, Biddy, if you ’re so idle, girrul, ye ’ll cry two tears out of one eye sometime;’ and now the time ’s come, mum.”

She wore a green alpaca dress, faded, of course, and rumpled, and with great black slate-shaped patches on it, one of them right in the middle of her back. I felt impelled to do sums on her with white chalk. I could n’t “stand” her. Inefficiency and amiability make a most aggravating combination. I paid her a week’s wages; and she went off the third day.

Once, in a strait, Debby, my nurse, who had been with me for years, went to work in the kitchen, and I tried to get a new nurse. Nurses might be more easily found than cooks, we thought. I had once read

in the back of a cook-book that it was utterly wrong and almost wicked to tell any of the trials or details of housekeeping to one's husband, and that never under any circumstances should one allude to servants in talking to one's acquaintance, or speak of one servant to another. When I was married, I determined to follow this good advice to the very letter. What was my horror in the first year in this house to find that no subject of conversation with Allan and my neighbors rose so frequently to my lips as the subject of servants, and I even compared notes about servants on the cars. The pattern of the wall-paper in the intelligence office, and the faces I saw there, flitted through my dreams, and the sound of my foot-falls upon the oil-cloth on its floor echoed in my ears without ceasing. I began to feel aggrieved when I went into the office if my usual chair by the iron safe was occupied, as if a stranger had taken my reserved seat ! The pleasant Swede who kept the office greeted me always with cordiality. I had never "fought" about a servant with him. He confided to me the characteristics of different ladies as they went out. Pleased would they have been if they had heard him !

He looked upon me as a friend. Behind the partition I knew what went on and who were there, for he told me. I knew that the old, old women, who came

and went, asked to have places found for them, though they did n't wish places, and knew no one would employ them ; but they came there day after day to keep warm by the big stove and to hear the gossip of the place. They gave free advice to the young girls about wages and hours of service, and "days out." They brought their knitting and a bit of lunch in a newspaper ; it was a woman's club,—their Sorosis.

Not tell Allan about my adventures at "the office !" why, he could hardly wait till I got my bonnet off to hear about them.

But not only at the office did I hear of servants. People who heard of my trials began to write to me and offer their protégées. Once a lady living in the city wrote asking me to try as nursery-maid an excellent young girl who was unfortunately slightly deaf and slightly near-sighted. Of course I'd try her ; I wondered that the lady should mention such trifles.

The excellent girl came.

I sent her every day to the post-office with Douglas, who was then five years old, and I charged her not to allow Douglas ever to step on the track that ran along the middle of the road. After they had been taking these trips for a week, I happened one day to say

to Douglas, "Of course you never step on the car track."

"Oh, yes, we do, mamma," he answered ; "we walk always on the track, — on those wood-pieces that go across ; but she is very careful. She says she can't see or hear very well, and that as soon as I see the cars coming and hear them 'oot, I must tell her, and we'll get off."

"The lady" had n't told me anything about a near-sighted conscience.

Another correspondent was much interested in a young German girl, and wished me to try her. She had lived, so the girl said, among "Christian Americans" in the city, and was fond of children and the country ; and she was very amiable, and could read English, and her family were very respectable. So she came.

After she had been one week in the house, she asked to go home for a certain sack she had forgotten. She did not return that night, as she had promised. The next day she appeared with a rather flurried manner, and said, "Oh, Mrs. Burroughs, I found when I went home that my mother was getting so old and feeble that she'll have to have me at home."

"She can't be but a week older than she was last week," said I. "How aged was she then?"

"Forty-seven. But oh, she looks so much older than she did last week that I think I 'll have to leave."

"Why did n't you come home last night, as you promised to do, Kate?" I asked.

"Because I had to wait to see mother, — she was out cleaning house ; and they 're goin' to have an exhibition at the Sunday-school, and they had been for me to speak a piece, and they are lonely without me at home."

Well, I appreciated her feelings, — the "me and my folks" feelings. I 'd rather have my "own folks" with nothing, than all the joys of earth without them.

I had by this time tried representatives of nearly every nation, and nearly every religious denomination. I told Allan as I went off one morning that I should no doubt come back with a little yellow Chinaman.

At last, however, instead of a Chinaman I brought home a tall colored woman. She was a capital cook, and seemed cheerful, and sang hymns at her work. One night I went early to bed with a headache. Late in the evening I was awakened suddenly by a rustling at my bedside. I opened my eyes in a fright, and saw Nancy standing beside me. ,

“Oh, Mis’ Burroughs,” said she, in a sepulchral tone, “I ’se committed an awful crime,—oh, an awful crime.”

“What is it, Nancy,” I cried, starting up in alarm. Had she poisoned me?

“Oh, I ’se broke one of you’ best chiny plates,—oh, do forgive me!”

One plate! That was a mild extent of breaking. Nancy considered breaking china as the worst of sins,—stealing made no noise and was not always discovered.

One day Nancy came to me with a long strip of old black silk in her hand.

“Are you willin’ I should use dis silk?” she asked.

“What for,—a duster?” said I. “It is a duster now.”

“Oh, no; I wants ter give a weddin’ present to a friend o’ mine, and I thought when I see that in the duster closet what a lovely sash it would make.”

I presented the silk at once and some blue fringe for the ends; and the next day I was favored with a sight of the completed gift. It was lined with black cambric, and made up in a great bow. Nancy said afterward that her friend was “dreffle” pleased with it, and wore it at the wedding.

When I came home one Sunday from church, there

had been no preparation for dinner. No Nancy was in the kitchen. Debby was in the nursery with Elinor, and thought the dinner was nearly ready; she said she had heard Nancy upstairs not an hour before. But Nancy had departed, and taken ten dollars of Debby's with her! Debby said she had told her the night before that she was very lonesome away from prayer meetings, and did n't think she should stay long.

There are memories of a black boy, Edward, about seventeen years old, who spent a few weeks with us; he arrived on the same train with an uncle of ours who was coming out to dine. "Oh, there's Uncle Henry and Edward coming up the sidewalk," exclaimed Douglas, who was looking for the expected darky; and little Elinor, looking out of the window, clapped her hands and cried, "Oh, Uncle Henry and Uncle Edward are coming! I'm glad I have a nice black uncle now!" We often spoke of him as "Uncle Edward."

He had come from a family of numberless brothers and sisters, and from a tenement-house in a city; and he could not adjust himself to the country and to limited company. The cook heard him crying after he had gone to bed on the night of his arrival, and came

to tell me, fearing he was ill; he would n't answer when she asked him at his door. I made Allan go to his room.

"What made you stay so long," I asked when he returned to the study.

"I had to have a lantern lighted to leave in his room; he was afraid of spooks, he said."

"The great baby!" said I, laughing.

"He has been living in three rooms, with a dozen or so in the family," said Allan; "and he's lonely."

The next day, as Allan was passing the garden, where "Uncle Edward" was at work, he said cheerfully, "Well, Edward, this is fine air to-day."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Edward, sadly. "I don' fin' no fault wi' de air; if dere was as much company as dere is air, it would be a very fine place, sir."

He went to Sunday-school the few weeks he was with us. "Where does your lesson begin next week?" Allan asked him, as he met him at the gate with his book in his hand, one Sunday.

"It begins at 'What did he do next,' sir."

And Edward, it turned out, was a widower! Think of a widower not yet seventeen years old.

Debby Johnson was so good and commonplace that there was never anything to tell about her. She was

like one of those bits of machinery, well oiled but unseen, which keep the great flying arms and spinning-wheels in order, and ready to do the work. She sang out of tune, and she had but one song : —

“ The night was dark and fearful ;
The blast went wailing by ; ”

but she sang the tune in quick-step time, which partially robbed it of its terrors. She had an orange-colored scarf with broché ends, which she wore always on public occasions, spread out flat over her shoulders ; and she carried a dark-blue parasolette, as she called it, with deep fringe, and a pagoda top. When the cover wore out, she ripped it off, and using it for a pattern, she re-covered the frame with silk of the same shade.

Her brother and she owned a farm in Vermont, and thither she meant to repair in her old age and live in “ her side of the house,” when she had amassed sufficient fortune to live in idleness, — and her ideas of a fortune were limited, — for the farm could only support her brother’s family. She was a tall brawny Yankee woman, very sensible and very capable. No poetry about Deborah Johnson, and yet it seemed as if the dew had left the grass and the sunshine left the day when Debby went back to Vermont to take care of

the motherless children of her brother. I hoped he would marry when "the year was out," so that I could have her back ; but instead of that he died, and then Debby's lot was fixed for the rest of her life.

The cook I had just then wished to be "upstairs girl," so a cook was now wanted. Of course Debby's departure made it necessary to begin once more my pilgrimages to the intelligence office. I knew that the genial Swede would welcome me warmly as I entered, and say I was "quite a stranger." I believe he had not seen me for nearly three weeks. But I was about to secure immunity from my visits to his office for a long time. Everything comes to him who waits. I had spent a good part of a year waiting in that office, and at last —

II.

DOUGLAS and I went into the intelligence office one day. He and the Swede were, alas, old friends. He gave Douglas a picture of a steamer, on pink paper with careful directions on it in the Scandinavian language for getting transatlantic passage, as if we wanted to sail away "to Norraway, to Norraway, to Norraway o'er the faem."

A few spruce young Swedes were sitting on a yellow settee by the door, and in a corner apart sat a timid-looking old man. He appeared so utterly forlorn that I asked the young man at the desk, Mr. Johanssen, if it were possible that that old man was looking for a place. He told me that the old man had left Denmark with a party of men from his native town, to go to his married daughter "out West." He was so old that it was thought best to intrust one of the men with his money, his tickets, and the check of his little blue chest. This man also had the letter in his keeping, with the directions for getting him to his daughter's very door. But one night in changing cars at a junction somewhere, he missed his party and found

himself alone, helpless, without money, in a strange country. "New York" was all he could say in English, and he gave that confidently in reply to every question. Poor soul ! He might as well have said western hemisphere. Some one, supposing New York to be his home, put him on a return train, and he arrived in the city, where he was soon arrested as a vagrant. He was found sitting on a curb-stone, the tears running down his cheeks. As no one could understand him, this Swede, the keeper of the office, who was somewhat learned in Scandinavian dialects, was sent for to interview him. Now for two weeks he had cared for the old man, paying board for him at a decent house where he himself lodged. The old man was so grateful that he could n't bear to have his one friend out of his sight, and sat every day from morning till night in sight of him in the office. Nothing had been heard from his friends ; and as he did n't know the name of the place where his daughter lived, it was hopeless to attempt to find her, and he was to be sent back to Denmark, to his native town, at once.

Douglas listened with wide-open eyes to the tale.

"Dear, dear !" said I, "I am as sorry for the poor daughter who is waiting for him as for the old man himself. It is terrible."

Douglas pulled at my dress and showed me a little pile of pennies in his hand. "I might give these to him and just smile at him," said he.

The old man had a far-away look in his faded eyes. Was he thinking of that home which was all of earth that was familiar to him, far across the seas, or of his daughter, as remote, as utterly lost to him as if he had gone to the life beyond? We went up to him. Douglas touched him and held out the money. Then as the old man did not take it, the little fellow opened the closed and withered hand which lay upon his knee, put the pennies in it, and shut the fingers over them. Then looking into the old man's face, he smiled a smile so full of good-will that the weary face lighted up, and the old man laid his other hand on my little boy's head and raised his eyes, as if he sought a blessing on him. The tears came into my eyes.

Just then the door opened, and a fresh-looking young woman came in, with a child in her arms who was dressed more for health than for style, for she had red flannel pantalettes coming down to her little ankles. There was also a rosy-cheeked boy of about ten years, wearing a Glengary cap and a gay plaid neck-tie. "That's a thrifty mechanic's wife," thought I, "who has come to get a young girl to help her

through the Winter." After a minute's talk at the desk, Mr. Johanssen brought the thrifty-looking little party to me, and seating the young woman before me said, "I think she will suit you."

"Are these your children?" I asked in dismay.

"Oh, no, ma'am," said the pretty Scotch girl, with a bright smile. Then in her pleasant Glasgow accent she told me that these were her cousin's children, and that she was just in "two weeks frae Canada, and two years come Christmas frae Scotland." Then she opened her satchel and spread before my admiring eyes—my tired eyes used to looking at crumpled, dingy, lying references—sheets of fresh note-paper, each certifying to Catharine Elizabeth Drummond's good character and capabilities. These papers had started from Scotland, and had been certified to in Canada, and again in New York, by some one connected with the Young Men's Christian Association.

After we had discussed these letters for some time, for "Tibbie" was loath to let me off till I had read every line, I asked her what wages she had had.

"Perhaps ye had best try me," said Tibbie, "then ye can batter mak' up your mind, what I'm worth to ye."

I had surely found a "new kind of girl." Douglas had been engaged during this time in looking the boy

carefully over. "I have a boy in a picture," said he, at last, "with a cap on like yours, and it says under the picture —

" 'Here is Johnny on his Sheltie,
Ridin', racin', helty-skelty.' "

"That 's a Scotch cap," said Tibbie, "and that 's a Scotch laddie beneath it. 'Tak' off your cap, Rob, and mak' a bow!"

"My grandmother was Scotch," spoke up Douglas. "I like the Scotch, they are such good fighters. I bet Bruce or Wallace could beat all the English there are in one day."

The young woman laughed, — a joyous laugh. "Sae ye 'd fight for Prince Chairley, wad ye?" she asked.

"Yes," said Douglas; "I'm part Scotch, so I 'd have to."

Then the Scotch boy broke in, and demanded seriously of Douglas, "Are ye an Orangeman?"

Now Douglas was beyond his depths; but he bravely answered, "Yes," casting an eye at the bag, with a lurking hope that oranges might be hidden away under the "credentials," as Tibbie called them.

At last it was arranged that Tibbie should meet us at three o'clock at the station. I wanted to begin to own her as soon as I could. Rob and Douglas parted with promises of meeting again, and one of the creden-

tials was rescued from the baby, who was just preparing to chew it.

"I might as well write me name and character upon the shiftin' sands as to give it to yer keepin'," said Tibbie, addressing the baby. And they went off with a farewell wave and "da, da" from the baby to the intelligence office in general.

When we arrived at the station, we found Tibbie seated, with a square tin box on one side and a round tin box on the other, both japanned in brown. They at once suggested crackers and cookies. But no, one held a bonnet, and the other some Scotch gingham dresses and white linen aprons.

With Tibbie's advent, new joy came into the household. She had her faults, and so have I mine. I knew better than to look for angels at Mr. Johansen's office. For one thing, she seemed to possess a changeable day-calendar of her own arranging, by which her sun set, rose, and set again, according to her suggestion. Sometimes breakfast was half an hour before the appointed time, sometimes half an hour after; but it was always good when it came. If the breakfast was late, she cheerfully announced that she rose early that morning and had cleaned all the silver before breakfast. If we were called to the table when first awakened, she would announce that having extra

work to do, she could n't be hindered by sluggards ! As Allan's business did not tie him to early trains, Tibbie soon subjugated the family to her will.

One morning, when we had been waiting for half an hour to be called to the table, my neat and smiling cook invited me into the kitchen to show me a "snow-white wall and sweet closets," which she had whitewashed while all the family were asleep. "I got through in the closet and blacknit me stove just as the clock was strikin' twa. Sae I a bit o'erslept mesel'," she said.

A neat kitchen, orderly closets, a daintily kept bread-box ! Oh, Tibbie, a good day greeted my eyes when I met you ! And Tibbie was happy too.

"It's a blessed thing," said Tibbie to me one day, when a delightful old minister had been dining with us, — "it's a blessed thing to dwell where the fear o' God is before the eyes o' folk, instead o' the fear o' men. Now when I lived just oot o' Glasgow at Colonel Landly's, and see their reckless way o' livin', — the colonel a-pourin' brandy into his cheese, and takin' a hot toddy before ganging to his bed, — I felt as if I were abidin' under the tower o' Siloam. An' had it not been for the colonel's leddy, I wad nae hae stayed there one day. She an' mesel' were the only abstainers in the hoose. I said once tae her when the

colonel was quite silly in drink, 'Dear Mistress Landly, how can ye live wi' him; why don't ye tak' yer own money and gang awa' by yoursel'?' 'Tibbie, Tibbie,' says the dear leddy, wi' the tears in her een, 'I love him for what he was, and what I hope he will be. The varra God,' says she, 'that made us has to look at something beside oursels in order to love us, even the best o' us.'

"Ah," added Tibbie, "but that was a fine castle o' a hoose; and the clock in the great hall had a long line o' soldiers come marchin' oot o' it at the callin' o' the hours. An' in the drawin'-room, I most fell faintin' when I first gaed in an' see them white marble folk standin' here an' there wi'out a scrap o' claes to their names. I asket the colonel's leddy aboot het, an' if she could na' wind some o' those soft silks aboot them she had brought from India, but she only laughet; she said that they was made from images found in Rome ages ago. She was a holy leddy," added Tibbie, thoughtfully, "but by livin' wi' the colonel she had become contaminated by his ideas."

With Tibbie's advent a new life opened to Douglas. He had always been strictly forbidden to go into the kitchen, but now he might sit if he chose for an hour at a time on one end of the ironing-table, lost to everything but Tibbie's wonderful tales, — the tales of the

shepherd cousins who “cam down frae the Hielands” to sell their flocks every year, and who after the sale always called on ‘Tibbie’s mother; “five big Hieland men i’ their kilts an’ their bunnits wi’ a string o’ collie-dogs behind ’em.” The dogs used to sit solemnly round, she said, with their best manners, as if they too were far-off cousins. She told how she would keep watch for her father’s boat — he was a pilot — through “the bit winder on the stair,” and how she “would always see him first o’ ony and flee down tae the wharf, an’ gie a flyin’ leap intil the boat, — a leap that frightened the very sailors.”

All ‘Tibbie’s friends and acquaintances became familiar to the entire family. She quoted Colonel Landly on all points of table dainties, or men’s dress. She undertook the care of Allan’s boots after a fashion learned of the colonel’s page; and Allan walked in boots that glittered after that. To me, “Mrs. Clark” and “Mrs. Martin” and “Maggie Tullock” and “Elizabeth Fountain” were soon well known. I should, I am sure, have known any one of them who might have walked in unannounced.

It was a great charm to ‘Tibbie to live in the house with people of Scotch blood “only one generation back,” where she might use her Glasgow accent not only without rebuke, but to the pleasure of the house-

hold. Ah, "Rabbie Burns" was not left to charm in Scotland alone. Scotch songs echoed continually through our kitchen. Elinor picked them up after a fashion.

"Come, fill up your horses ;
Come, fill up your men,
And awa' wi' the bunnits o' Bonnie Dundee !"

ran one of her versions, sung in her sweet little voice on one note, sparrow-fashion.

One day when the children and I were alone at dinner, Tibbie came in with a plate of bread. I made some remark that brought out a quotation from Burns from her, and when once Tibbie uttered that name, it became a text on which she could open an endless discourse.

She set the plate on the side-table, and, lost to the present, she began to recite a poem composed by the Rev. Mr. Somebody on the unveiling of the Burns Monument at Glasgow.

These lines have stayed with me :—

"He asket bread, and they gied him nane ;
But when he was dead they gied him a stane."

"Ay, ay," said Tibbie, "what a concourse there was that day, all flockin' to the moniment ! and when the unveilin' o' 't took place, I first felt the cauld shivers runnin' down me spine, and the blood a-surgin' to me

heid. Ay," and Tibbie wiped a tear from her eye, "an' his cauld hand o' stane hauldin' a daisy, — the crimson-tippit daisy, ye ken.

"It was a great thing," continued Tibbie, "for one mon to speak oot a' that was in the heart o' a nation. That was a true word the auld wives said at the birth o' him, —

"'We'll aye be proud o' Robin!'"

She sighed, she smiled; and then — she was in my dining-room once more. And taking up the plate, she passed it about the table and left the room in silence.

Little Elinor got down from her chair, and opened the door after Tibbie.

"Never mind, Tibbie," she said, "the next time he comes we'll let him take tea with you and show Scott to him."

The one thing that perfectly cemented the friendship between Tibbie and Douglas was a present he made her on her first Christmas with us, — "The Life and Poems of Robert Burns," illustrated, and bound in a bright red cover. She soon had bits of blue yarn for book-marks between the leaves. She knew the book from cover to cover by heart, but she loved to look at the pictures, and now and then to refresh her memory.

Douglas learned to dance a Highland fling on the kitchen floor, while Elinor stood first on one leg and then on the other, and she thumped with both with all her might when Tibbie “came in” on the chorus. I heard Tibbie one day advising Douglas to wash his hands. “Come,” said she, “your hans wad file the Logan water, an’ yer hair needs cutting, too ; ye look like a Nazarite.”

III.

IT was on a sweet day in May that we came first to look at this house. It seemed as if June had stepped into May to see that all was going well. I always feel as if we bought that day with the house. When one buys a house in the country, what wonderful things are thrown in,—all the sky for one thing, and the sound of the wind in the trees at night, and the mist on the morning fields.

We really bought this house the moment we came in sight of it, before I had looked through the kitchen, or Allan had inquired into the question of repairs. It possessed at once a wonderful charm for us ; it was an instance of love at first sight.

“What a dear, homelike place !” said I.

“The trees are there, the orchard is there, the house is there, and a barn is there [we had not expected a barn] ; and anything that is n’t there in the way of modern improvements,” said Allan, cheerfully, “we can put in next Spring.”

“Bountiful ‘next Spring’ !” said I.

Then we laughed. We had met several "next Springs" with unfulfilled promises, which nevertheless always pointed encouragingly, as they vanished, to their fellows on the way.

Perhaps if we had looked at the kitchen first, or at the cellar, which was under the parlor and well-nigh an eighth of a mile from the kitchen, we might at least have paused to consider. But we had looked at the spacious square parlor first, with its six windows, and at the chambers above, where the old cherry-trees fairly thrust their budding boughs in at the windows; and we had seen the cheerful dining-room, with its open fireplace bordered with a row of old blue tiles. There were six different scenes on the tiles, of Dutch houses, Dutch windmills with careering sails, Dutch boats, and Dutch people skating up and down on Dutch canals. The six followed one another in order, and then began over again,—as if that were all there was of Holland. Windmills and boats and Dutch folk skating,—was n't that a treasure to find behind an old zinc fireboard? And the mantel was high and carved in fans,—a big fan in the middle, a small fan on each side, and so gradually down to little "hemi-demi-semi-quaver" fans at each end.

When we did look at the old kitchen "devoid" of set tubs and of faucets, and with two small-paned

windows, my heart failed me. But Allan said (he had been mightily taken with the last room we had seen, at the head of the front stairs,—an L room with three windows and a fireplace),—Allan said, “As there’s no such thing as finding absolute perfection in this world, suppose we choose a house for our own pleasure instead of the cook’s?”

We looked at other houses, but Allan could never get away from the pleasing vision of his study,—that little room set apart in the L, up three steps, with a bolt on the door and a big iron key.

If one wishes to buy a house, it should be looked at every month for a year. But then, I dare say, it would not be bought at all, for we mortals are such poor, unreasoning creatures that one little inconvenience outweighs a hundred blessings. Still, to actually own a house is to be content with it, as content goes in this world. One accepts it as the marriage contract is accepted,—for better or for worse. It is true that the cherry-trees did bring flies by the thousands, but I reflected that there were people who had had it laid upon them to smell ailanthus-trees all their lives, and saw visions of travellers in the desert straining their eyes in vain to catch sight of the fronds of even one distant tree. Thus I piously encouraged my soul by reflecting on the greater woes of my fellows.

The lack of bells was distressing in this straggling house, where instead of a group, we owned a procession of rooms. I could not have summoned my nurse from the far-away kitchen whither she had been sent for a glass of water, even if she had chosen — as I sometimes thought she did — to follow the example of Father Abraham, who seems to have stopped and dug a well every time he wanted a drink. Yet I would not have exchanged this house, warmed and brooded over by the sun, cooled by the wings of the wind, shaded by the green comfort of trees, for our late handsome, but lofty “flat.”

It was delightful to own a house. We had owned a home for years, but never a house to put it in before ; and how wearisome a thing it is to live in hired houses, only tenants know. For the sake of getting a settled home of our own, it was even well worth while to go through the exertions of “moving” again.

For some time before we actually got settled here, my brain refused to act except in the line of fitting square carpets to long rooms or wide shades to narrow windows. Allan laughed at me for humming continually : “When shall my labors have an end?” or “Oh, let us anew our journey pursue !” My sleep was uneasy. I would start up in the night with the fear that the casters for my favorite easy-

chair had been lost ; and in church it would suddenly occur to me that they were tied inside the bagging cover which had not yet been removed. The abnormal condition of constantly putting our Penates into boxes and taking them out again seemed to be our normal condition.

Allan insisted on having each box marked with a list of its contents. Allan is a methodical man, — one of those praiseworthy persons who can put his hand on anything in the dark, — but packing gets the upper hand of the most orderly of persons sometimes. In our last moving I saw a box inscribed “white vest, lamp-shade, and so forth.” I had to laugh, but I sympathized with Allan. Just think of all the odd things there were to pack ! That big white piqué vest that Uncle Joseph wore when he visited us once, and left behind by mistake when he went away. That was years ago, and I often think still, after I’ve retired for the night and can’t see to it at once, that the vest ought really to be returned to Uncle Joseph. I dare say I should have given it away before this if I had known whom to give it to. If you had ever seen Uncle Joseph in it, you could n’t present it to a tramp. To whom could I give a large white piqué vest ? Then there was that figured globe of the great astral lamp, with the dangling glasses that had been

my admiration in the parlor at home when I was little. We never had a moss-covered bucket at home, but this filled its place in my imagination, and I would n't throw that away if it did n't fit anything.

The "and so forths" in Allan's box were a bundle of old photographs and some daguerrotypes of relatives in hoops and wearing bonnets with posies inside, and ambrotypes, which at the last moment had been found in a little table drawer without a key; also a small, green, mouldy-looking idol which had been presented to us by an "agent" of a missionary society, who had often stopped at my grandfather's house, and who had "descended" to my father and so on to me. We always took the idol when we moved. To throw away an idol would have seemed a mark of disrespect to foreign missions, although we did use it just once, when the hammer was lost, to crack nuts on a flatiron. There was also a little dollar clock that would n't go.

If King Solomon could have written about Allan's box, he would no doubt have said, —

There be four things which be "and so forths," —
An idol in a Christian land;
A clock that will not tell time;
A large piqué vest;
A lamp-shade that will not fit.

We had thought a little of building ; but I am glad we bought this old house instead. I like places where people have lived before me. A new house has only memories of painters and plasterers about it, and of visits to paper-stores, and of the weariness of selecting the right color of paint for the outside, which is the wrong color after it is on. I wish you could have seen this house before we mingled our taste with that of those who had gone before us. Years ago my house was the parsonage of this town, before the new parsonage was built next to the church. After that it was occupied by an old minister who had lived in an adjoining parish, and who after his parishioners had brought to his notice the fact indisputable that he was not as young as he had been once, bought this house and took boys to fit for college. The old orchard at the back of the house remains as it was, — a veritable apple-tree orchard. It is not one of the new-fashioned orchards that go with Queen Anne houses, where little dwarf trees are placed, a few show apples growing on each, in neat circles of earth, as if dropped, stand and all, from a toy village. This is an orchard with old trees that lay their heads together, — old trees with leaning trunks of rough bark, with nests and chirps and trills behind the blossoms, and later with boughs heavy with apples and bending

low. And at evening, when over a far low hill, hazy and blue, the sun slips away in golden glory, then the trees stand rugged and dark, massed against the yellow stretch of sky. This coloring reminds me of a picture I've not seen for years, painted by Innis, of heavy forest-trees, dark against a sunset sky, and along the woodpath a laborer plodding away toward the sunset and his home. There was a poem in that picture.

In the old minister's time, our side-yard was a large old-fashioned box-bordered garden. The first day I came here I found a lilac crocus in blossom, and later one scarlet tulip. There were straggling rose-bushes everywhere, and a strawberry shrub and a wegelia-bush and a great tree of althea. Between this garden and the orchard was a berry-garden, the untrimmed bushes hanging over their fallen supports. In the middle of the garden was a clump of lilac-bushes which were almost large enough to be called trees, and not far away a laburnum-bush. We soon pulled up the rows of old box, and turned the garden into a great green lawn. I was willing the half-dead box should go, but I wished its pungent, clean smell might have remained behind.

Bordering the broad path from the front gate,— a hospitable gate that swings inward, not a gate that

pushes you back upon the sidewalk, — on one side is a row of old locust-trees, with rough furrowed bark, that stretch high like columns, before the branches spread. It is strange that so rough a trunk should be crowned with leaves so dainty and fern-like, and with delicate fragrant blossoms. Whether these trees are so old that their sap flows sluggishly, or whether it is an accepted rule of etiquette among locust-trees to come late and go early, I do not know. But I see that the maples along the sidewalk long precede them in their leafing in the Spring ; and in the Fall, while all the other trees are yet fresh and green, the tiny locust-leaves are already flying through the air. We shall have to put wire netting about the well (I've said that every Summer), the locust-leaves float down in such numbers.

The delicious water of that well has always been a joy to me ; but I believe Undine's uncle must have got into it lately. Timothy Farrel "previnted" a kitten from falling into it one day. Another day the nurse dropped her spectacles down there ; but when the next pail of water was drawn, the glasses came riding triumphantly up astride the bucket. A little girl passing from Sunday-school stopped here once to get a drink, and lost her Bible down the well and a good supply of small Scripture cards. A boy who

was weeding the garden lost his hat there, and he and several assistants spent an hour in rescuing it. We lately brought up an infant frog in the bucket, but we sent him right back to his mamma. Plumbers and water-pipes are not the only evils connected with water, you see.

My neighbors have told me something of the people who used to live here. The old minister, they said, had a sister, — Miss Lois ; a gentle little maiden lady with white hair in puffs, a tiny lace cap, and a white lace kerchief round her neck. Miss Lois was an excellent nurse, and always willing to sit up at night with sick folk in town. The old minister and she were both fond of flowers, and were often seen working together in the garden. One of my neighbors gave me an oleander-tree in a square green box, which had belonged to Miss Lois. It stands in a sunny corner of the dining-room, just where it stood when she was here. My favorite corner was her corner too, it seems. I felt quite as if she were a relative, and as if I ought at least to have put on a black ribbon for her. Oh, dear, I wish she were alive and here this minute ! How easy I should feel about the children when I am away from home, if she were only about with her roll of linen and her peppermint bottle ! I wish I could meet her gentle little ghost about the

house and prevail upon her to haunt us. I often think of the old minister as going about the garden walks with his hands behind him, like another old minister I knew when I was little, who used to sing as he walked : —

“ The Lord into his garden came ;
The roses yield a sweet perfume,
The lilies thrive and grow.”

I wish his ghost would come too.

I love my street which is half a road, — for not along streets, but along roads are daisies and wild roses found, and golden-rod and asters. My road slopes suddenly at its foot toward “the Narrows,” so that we cannot see the beach, but as we look down we see sloops glide by, and flitting sails. I have a friend whose house is near the foot of the road, and on the shore of the Narrows. It is only a strip of sea that she sees, with no dim horizon, no phantom ships. But still she looks out upon part of the world’s highway to a great city, and ships go by from far countries, heralded sometimes by booming cannon from the fort. So well has she come to know the flags of other nations, that as she sits in the deep old-fashioned window-seat, or rocks her baby at her chamber window, she knows when ships come in from Spain or Germany,

from England or from France, all brave in white and red and blue.

Upon those waters there is constant passing. The little tugs go steaming up and down as pompously as if all the business of the world were intrusted to them. The prize yachts sail there, and sloops go by, and row-boats from quarantine. At twilight, rafts float past with crowds of Italian workmen, and on board bonfires glow, and torches flare, as on they float. And when the land grows dim across the Narrows and is almost lost in night, suddenly a thousand lights peep out and make it a garden of stars.

Between our house and our next neighbor's lie long fields. I never knew how beautiful the soft brown of the freshly-ploughed earth is in the Springtime until I lived here and owned some of it; and here and there the fields are dotted with bobbing figures,—boys and German women planting potatoes. This year one woman wears a gown of lilac print, and on her head an orange-colored handkerchief. I thank the old woman for her dress; it is grateful to my eyes. I wonder if any one has ever raised a prayer of thanks for bright colors. I'll do it now. We do not own these Bouguereaus or Millets or Bonheurs of ours all the year, but we always own them in the Springtime. Sometimes my old German woman

stands hoeing near my fence. Her face is seamed with years, but she looks content and cheerful ; and when she raises her head and catches my eye, as I sit at the window, she bows and smiles. If I am in the garden when she goes home at night, I go to the gate and speak to her. "Old Bertha" she is called, and she drops a little curtsy and kisses my hand. She sits on a strip of grass by our fence to eat her dinner. One day Douglas was her guest. It was a pretty picture to see them sitting side by side. Douglas was overwhelmed with gratitude, and after that he often saved some dainty to share with his friend. He wishes I could have tasted her good bread ! One day I saw a big bundle of shawls lying under the fence, and after a while a young woman who had been working in the field came toward it, unrolled it, and settled herself to nurse a baby. I went out to speak with her. She showed me her baby with pride, and told me that it was nine days old ; and both of them lived and thrived.

Across the street, in the long fields which lie away to the east, the men are ploughing up the hard earth into soft loam ; a white horse and a brown horse, a man with a blue shirt, — and a song thrown in. A little dog goes behind the man, up and down, up and down the long furrows. Ploughing is weary work, the

little dog thinks, but it must be done. And he looks forward to the long night when he can lay his weary little head upon his tail and rest.

Outside the fence on pleasant days the Italian women are gathering the leaves and roots of the dandelions, and packing them in great bags on their backs. They come back every year with the dandelion. The women look just as they should look, — only they have the wrong background. Their coloring is rich, their gowns are bright, their showy jewelry dangles from ear and neck. At dusk you think they must step into a Florentine gilt frame for the night; they must surely have stepped out of one to come here. Alas, what dens they do seek for the night! In the outskirts of the city one day I saw a real Bouguereau baby, with his orange, as usual, and his handsome mother; and he was scraping contentedly on an ash-heap with a stick.

Every night at dusk an old darky ambles by on a mule, — a bit of Georgia or Car'lina passing by. The children wave their hands and shout good-night frantically from the fence. He waves his hand and laughs his chuckling laugh. Elinor calls him "Uncle Ned" and loves him. Douglas wishes that he too could ride "a nice thin ass with a slender tail."

And sometimes, "all on a Monday morning," like

Prince Charley, the soldiers from the fort dash by on horseback, their blue capes with red linings streaming in the wind. The clatter of the horses' hoofs summons the children to the garden fence in flying haste. The sun gleams on the bugle. Douglas waves his flag, waves it wildly "so that the soldiers won't notice that there are n't enough stars." His little patriotic heart swells. He knows the call "boots, saddles, and away!" The soldiers smile at the little folk, as they dash by in a cloud of dusty glory. The children's eyes gleam with excitement. "Oh," cries Douglas, "I feel as if I could hug my country!" But on the days when the artillery-men ride slowly by, with the mounted cannon lumbering along, the children look grave. There is a hint here of something more than is suggested by the gleaming bugle and the dashing horsemen in blue and red.

Our town is a delightful out-of-door town. I never cared for a village with streets and yards, gloomy and damp with dense shade-trees. We have all the air and sea-winds too, and all the light in the world, for we own the whole of the sky. From the nursery windows can be seen the sweet light of morning shining over three miles of level fields that stretch away to the sea, and to the glittering towers of the hotels on the far beach, which shine snowy white. I cannot

see the distant marsh meadows, in golden greens and browns, with rank rows of flag-lilies, and great stalks of marshmallows, whose pink trumpets glow and put to shame all the garden hollyhocks ; but I know that they are there, and that some of the sabbatias linger yet. Around the far horizon is a soft haze of foliage, from which the spire of a distant church peeps out ; and at dusk houses appear here and there that were invisible all day, their windows ablaze with the rays of the departing sun. Those little houses seem only to spring into existence when the day dies and weary folk need rest.

My town brought its name from beyond the sea. It has a name that conjures up a picture of dikes and windmills and canals and memories of stanch, brave souls. I live on Church Lane. Do you not like an old stone church, lichen-tinted, with a square tower all vine-clad ? Such a church we have. In Summer we catch only peeps of it through the maple-boughs from our south windows ; but in Winter it is clearly seen through a delicate tracery of leafless branches.

Years and years ago the very stones of our old church formed another building, one fashioned by the settlers from beyond the sea. That church was octagonal ; and the tiled roof rose in a sharp slant to the

little bell tower in the middle, where a brass weather-cock veered in the wind. The Bible on the pulpit-cushion was printed in Holland, in the Dutch tongue, and an hour-glass stood beside it. From the sounding-board above the high pulpit hung a golden dove.

The graveyard is still as quaint a place as could well be found. There are no walks laid out, save along the fence, where a wide path, grass-grown, is left unused. To go about the yard you must step on the green sod between the graves.

The land belongs to the church, not to the town, although it was quite the same thing, I imagine, in the old days. There are no family plots set apart by stone curbstones or by fences, for it is a gathering of kindred and of neighbors. There are a few great weeping-willows, and a white poplar with green and silver leaves which seem to twinkle out the flying minutes to the eye as they quiver in the lightest breeze.

The wild flowers grow luxuriantly along the line of the fence, and the myrtle which loving hands planted long ago runs far and wide through the grass, blooming on graves which were not there when it was planted. In one corner are the graves of the colored people, who were slaves here in generations gone by; and far back from the road there is a low granite

table, moss-grown and crumbling, which looks like an altar, and as if the sweet smoke of incense should rise from it morn and night. Now, when the friend, grieved sorrowing by a new grave, and wait in silence for the words from the minister, "Dust to dust, and the spirit to God who gave it," then the church-bell tolls from the stone tower, as if to bid all the dwellers in town in the sorrow, and to repeat to them, "Dust to dust, and the spirit to God who gave it."

A kindly old custom prevailed in town till within a year or two. The sexton of the church, at the request of the family into which death had come, went through the town, inviting each family to attend the funeral, as if to say, "Come, weep with them that weep, as one that comforteth the mourners."

At right angles with our street lies the King's Highway. O visions of royal pageants! Up that road, in days gone by, troops of red-coats marched, by order of a king; and later, by order of the people, from a near port the red-coats sailed away. Up this same road the splendid mail-coach, with its six horses, came swinging into town every day to the clear sound of a horn, and pulled up at the tavern door, on the corner of Church Lane and the King's Highway. We stand in one room of that old tavern now when we are waiting for the steam-cars. Across the wide

arched hall can be seen the carved doorways of the parlors, and a peep of the mantel with a spread eagle carved across its whole length.

On the other side of the street stands a long low house, half stone, half wood, with overhanging eaves and windows of many panes, one of which bears the name of the British officer with whom eloped the pretty girl that lived there — how many years ago !

As I have said, my road at one end runs into the Narrows. The other end vanishes in a paved and cobbled city street four miles away. All night long the western horizon reflects in a dull gleam the unquenched city lights. There is a strange unrest about it ; but in the east the soft darkness comforts wakeful eyes like sleep.

IV.

PERHAPS you have heard of the pleasure of seeing a picture grow. I will tell you my experience. One day I received a note from Pauline. My cousin Pauline is an artist ; and she is young and pretty, for which I am grateful, for I always feel under a personal obligation to youth and beauty. Her hair grows prettily about her brow in waves and rings ; her little nose tilts up ; her teeth are white and small. I don't know what charm lies in her eyes. I think it is the charming way she looks out of them. But about her mouth and chin there is a little resolute air which makes one feel easy about her future. She is a merry little body, and her laugh is very pleasant ; as Sarah "Jinkins" says, "She's good to hev."

She works with all her might and loves her work. She used to tell me every time she came to see me how much money the long gray stocking under the eaves had in it. She'd come oftener to see us, she said, if it was n't for the car-fare (it's fifty-five cents from the city and back). She used to tell me that she

longed for us, then plunged her hand, alas, far down into the stocking leg, weighed us and weighed Europe and couldn't decide, and then tossed up a penny, — heads, Cousin Molly ; tails, Europe.

After her old grandmother died, with whom she lived in western Massachusetts, she set out bravely to be an artist.

This was the young lady who wrote in rather a melancholy strain to tell me that she was having a very hard time with her models. A little French girl whom she had discovered after a long search and engaged to pose as a little girl sewing, had proved good for nothing ; she insisted on wiping her little nose constantly on a large red cotton handkerchief, and getting out of position. Now Pauline wished to come to our house to begin another picture ; and she concluded her note by asking if there were any geese in our town. Judging that there was no covert insult in the question, I replied that I knew of three geese, — their name was Jones ; and those three, two white and one gray, were owned by a woman who sold me milk, and I doubted not they could be hired by the day as models. In answer came another note from Pauline, naming a day when she would arrive, and asking that the geese might be ready for her.

A few days afterward a strange procession filed through our house to an unused bedroom, which sudden rain had forced us to substitute for the barn as a studio for the painting of animal life. Pauline led the way, carrying an easel; Douglas followed with the paints; after him, Elinor, who had been intrusted with a glass of water, for the geese, appropriately, were to be painted in water-colors; then Tibbie, struggling with three frantic, "squawking" geese. I brought up the rear with three flatirons, to which the geese were to be anchored with soft wide strips of cloth,—a sort of improvised ball and chain. Mary Shannon laid an old sweeping-sheet upon the carpet, and we proceeded to arrange the models, scattering some crumbs before them to occupy their minds and fill their time pleasantly.

But as soon as the great geese were settled to our minds, they at once began to get unsettled; the little French model was a wooden image compared with them. If Pauline began to sketch them in while they were hissing toward the right, they at once hissed toward the left, stretching out and drawing in their long necks, as if they were leagued together to defeat some sinister design which they suspected on our part.

"They are thirsty," I exclaimed; "why didn't I think of that? Mary, get a basin of water."

We placed the tin basin which she brought on the middle of the sheet. The old gray gander at once set his skinny claw on it and tipped it over. There was a rush for cloths to sop up the water.

"Mary," said I, reprovingly, "you should have brought a heavy china basin that they could n't upset."

When Mary returned with a large china basin, Pauline was sketching the biggest white goose as she stood motionless, her long neck outstretched and her yellow bill raised in an insulting manner, as if she said, "I'm Mrs. Jones's goose; whose goose are you?" The instant the basin was set on the floor, this goose just flapped her wings and squatted down in it, sending out such a shower as caused us all to retreat.

"Oh, Mary," I cried, "bring that piece of old in-grain carpet, and take this wet sheet away."

As soon as the gray gander and the other white goose saw their companion's comfortable seat in the basin, they both wanted to sit in the basin too; but the attempt only produced a wild fluttering of wings that did not at all disturb the soaking goose, which sat there so calm and collected that I am sure if Pauline had wished to paint three geese squatting in basins she could have depended on her models; but her idea was to paint them waddling up a path and

demanding entrance through a gate which was to be guarded by a small boy, barring their way to an enticing puddle. And she liked her subject better than that selected by the geese.

Suddenly the goose in the basin hopped to the floor, tipping the basin over as she hopped. "Mary! Quick, bring the rubber sheet!"

Mary flew to the hall closet and brought it. Then she, with Tibbie's help, bore out the ingrain carpet, as they before bore out the sheet, laid down the rubber sheet, and sopped up the carpet for the second time. The geese seemed rather weary by this time, and so they stood still; and Pauline painted away with great zeal till lunch-time.

"I suppose you haven't a gate," called Pauline to me. She was again settled at her work.

I had already provided the trees and the sky for that picture, besides the small boy and three geese, — and a real puddle, too. She wanted a gate now; and she asked for it in a jaunty way, as if I kept loose gates lying about my house, like spools or pins. She said little Douglas must lean over a gate to get just the pose she wished. She had tried him over a towel-rack, and it would n't work.

"Do you insist on a green gate?" I asked; "because I have none."

She did not.

“I have a white gate,” said I, “that used to bar the stairs when the children were little ; it is in the garret.”

I sat at this moment in my own room. Across the hall was my best guest-chamber. I had just put up new curtains in the windows, and I had left the door open to get the effect from my room. I had never really finished that room to my liking till that day ; it was a pretty room.

Oh, that gate ! “Mary !” I called. She came, expecting to be sent after a tin sheet for the geese, or to take up the carpet, or the floor. “Mary, in the front of the garret you will find a white gate, and —”

“A gate, ma’am?”

“Yes, a gate painted white. Bring it down to Miss Pauline.”

She went up the garret stairs.

I sat with my hands in my lap, still gazing into my pretty guest-chamber. It was in cream and pink. The paper I had found on the wall, a cream ground with pink prince’s feathers set here and there upon it, — oh, so pretty and old-fashioned ! The wood-work had been of a light pea-green ; but that was now changed to a soft cream-color, and I had cream-

colored cretonne with pink roses at the windows, and — a crash !

I looked up. There was a stout leg thrust through the ceiling of my finished, my beloved room !—a stout leg, with a black boot and unbleached stocking ; Mary's leg !

“ Woe betide me ! ” I cried ; “ she has gone through the unfloored part of the garret.”

I sat motionless. Pauline and the children rushed into my room under the impression that there were extra geese and extra basins in my part of the house. My eyes were fixed on the opposite room. Pauline, horrified, saw the leg drawn up into the ceiling ; then she looked at the heap of plaster on the floor.

“ What is it ? ” she cried.

“ It is Mary, getting your gate,” said I. “ What will you have next, — one of the chimneys, or a bottle of water from the River Jordan, or the hanging garden of Babylon ? just ask for one or all ! ”

Pauline, in a big linen apron, with a maul-stick in her hand, stood perfectly still ; then with a burst of ill-timed laughter she ran to the garret door.

“ Are you hurt, Mary ? ” she cried.

“ No, ma'am,” said Mary ; “ I found the gate ; ” and she appeared, lugging it down the stairs.

"Of course you are dead, Mary," said I. "Is your leg broken? Weren't you frightened out of your wits?"

"Well, I was a bit took off me guard," said Mary, in her quiet way; but she looked aghast as she beheld the ruin before her, the heap of dusty rubbish in the room where we had just hung the pink curtains, and which she had said was "so sweet it made her mouth water."

My father was a minister, and his house had been a hospitable one. So many people made it headquarters, coming as suited themselves, that we children were never surprised to wake in another room than the one where we had gone to sleep; we only wondered "who had come." Sometimes these frequenters came all at once, and then confusion reigned. On such occasions a woman, Nabby Stone, who had lived with my mother early in her married life, invariably appeared also to relate tales of her domestic woes, and to beg for old clothes. We called such a day a Nabby Stone day; but our old cook always spoke of it as "one of thim 'ere days." Now this was a Nabby-Stone day, — one of "thim 'ere" days. I must have inherited them.

At last the plaster was cleared up, the windows were left open, the geese submitted, Douglas looked over

the gate, and we began to think that the pig had got over the stile, when —

Our dog Scott is a gentle creature, sensitive to an inflection of the voice, obedient to a marvel, but he had shown a desire to run away. Now, we didn't propose to own a dog who wished to live with some one else, so Allan chained poor Scott in the back-yard for several days. He wailed and howled and besought to be released; he had been used to living with the family, to a dainty bit at the table, a warm corner in the nursery, and he was very much humiliated at being chained. This morning he had seen the geese brought "squawking" in, and had greatly desired to learn further particulars. At last, with constant pulling, he wriggled the little stake out of the ground and rushed into the house, dragging his chain after him. Upstairs he flew, and presented himself without warning in the "studio." He jumped on Pauline; he knocked Douglas down; he barked at the geese. Driven from the "studio," he ran to the nursery and hid under the bed, whence he was soon dragged out, chewing little Elinor's rolling-pin to bits. He caught a little book from Elinor's hand and tore it to pieces, and then fled downstairs like an escaped convict.

In the back-yard our next neighbor's sleek little

brown dog was regaling himself with a plate of bones. He was Scott's good comrade, the friend of his games, but now Scott seized him by the throat; he shook him, amid yells of terror from the little dog, till Tibbie flew to the rescue. Away dashed Scott to the clothes-yard, where "Mr. Yellow," our most respectable and middle-aged cat, sat on a box viewing the conflict. He dashed at this new victim. Mr. Yellow, taken unawares, fled to the barn for safety. Scott caught him on the way by his long yellow tail and actually broke it, — yes, broke his tail, so that though under Tibbie's pitying care it healed, it never waved again, only trailed like a yellow rag behind him to the end of his days.

What an hour of wild oats! A book destroyed, a rolling-pin chewed, a dog choked, and a cat with a broken tail!

After this, Scott went to the front piazza and lay quietly down, panting and taking little naps. Tranquilly he saw hens passing by. Unmoved he saw "Robin Hall," the striped cat, spit at him as he passed up the path. He did not bark at the little brown dog, who now stood on his hind-legs on his own side of the fence and looked between the pickets at him. He never noticed the suspender pedler; and stranger than all, when Tibbie at dusk brought out

the three geese, and according to Mrs. Jones's directions set them down in the road heading toward their home, he let them waddle off unmolested. He crept into the house early in the evening, apologized to every member of the family by going around the room and licking their hands and looking very humble, with his tail between his legs.

The next day the geese were brought back, the picture was finished, the mason mended the ceiling, and two months later the picture was sold, and hangs on the wall of a charming private gallery in New York.

Pauline, filled with remorse, promised to paint me a picture. I asked her not to put a gate in it, or a goose, or a basin; but to paint me, myself, lying in bed in a nice white gown, with my hands folded and my eyes closed.

I think that check which Pauline fluttered in my face ought to have belonged to me.

V.

ONCE upon a time, years ago, before I ever knew that Allan was alive, when life was sweet without Douglas and Elinor, we declared one spring, with the voice of the united family, that we could not live another Summer without a house of our own. We did not aspire to a country-house ; we only wanted a house in the country. We were the kind of people made not to board. We did n't like to do fancy work ; we did n't like to sit on a piazza dressed up from morning till night, talking of things we had no interest in to people we did not care for. "Summer boarders" as a class are dull beyond measure. I dare say in their usual surroundings they would prove interesting enough, but as summer boarders they seem like a menagerie, — the polar bear from his ice cake, the tiger from his jungle, the monkey from his palm-tree, and the buffalo from his prairie forced into unnatural surroundings and showing on a background of dingy canvas, while, to follow out the simile, there seems to be the same lack of sympathy between the collection and the keepers.

That very Spring, all unexpectedly, we got our wish. We found a little village in the heart of nature ; it lies there still, with the breath of the pine and the voice of the sea, and over the sea the south wind blowing.

Our cottage stood upon a hill that overlooked a bay, — a great quiet bay lying in the arms of the fields. Dear little cottage ! although it is a day and night's journey from my own home, it is inside my gate, since for pleasant memories' sake it is always inside my heart.

We were the first city people to go to the village ; and we were perfect strangers to the villagers. We gathered up all the furniture we could spare from our city house, bought what else we needed, and sent it down in advance to be stored in the barn. The day came for our departure, and we were in the gayest of spirits, although we knew we were to arrive in a strange place in darkness, at an unlighted house. But our big lunch-basket was well stored ; and was there not kindling ordered for the fire and candles to light us withal ?

But what a wonder ! When the stage drew up at the house, the lighted windows shone, the door was ajar, a fire upon the hearth greeted us, and in the dining-room the table was set and covered with dainties, — bread white as milk, delicious cake, a blue-

fish in the oven, and doughnuts ; such doughnuts ' light, egg-shaped, and wrapped in a mist of white sugar. And not a soul was there ! It was like the feasts that fairies provide for wandering princes ! It had seemed a hard thing to some kindly souls in the village that strangers should come at night, unwelcomed, and in this pleasant way they had made us their guests.

“ The captain's nephew,” from whom we had bought the house, — he had urged us in vain to buy the feather-beds, — had flaunted a cellar among its attractions, as if a cellar was a telephone or an electric bell ; but the cellar could not be found, — no, it could not be found, hunt as we would, outside and in. Doors opened into bedrooms and into closets ; but no door admitted us to a cellar. While we were still hunting, “ the nephew,” having heard that the cellar had run away, called in, and triumphantly lifting a trap-door in one corner of the painted floor of the kitchen, disclosed a dry well, — a whitewashed well, with shelves round its sides and a ladder leading into it. The cook soon learned to back down quite gracefully, when occasion required.

The “ nephew ” said there was a good “ dungeon ” too. We had never expected to own a dungeon ; and this proved to be a little cock-loft in the roof. We

had not been promised a big pink conch-shell to keep the kitchen door from closing ; but it was there. There were no fastenings to hold up the windows ; concordances, Greek books, and histories propped them till my father, in desperation at the vile use his beloved books had come to, whittled some strong sticks, and after that we gagged the windows. The stairs were steep. A ship-carpenter had built the house, and we had ropes fixed on either side of the enclosed stairs to "haul ourselves aloft." The dining-room we called the secret chamber, because there were five doors in it, two windows, and only enough space left for a great fireplace, a brick oven, and three closets in the wall. There was a little door in one corner about two feet high, opening into the kitchen, which we supposed must have been for the convenience of the "captain" when calling, "Alphonso, apportez le pâté de foie gras."

Dear little house, what a joy it was to us all ! It was our first own house, and we loved it like a first baby. We brought woodbine from the island to adorn it, maples from the wood, and brier-roses from the lane. I remember one day, several miles from home, seeing some magnificent daisies growing in a thick white border round a potato-patch in a field. We sprang out, shovel in hand (we always carried a shovel

on our drives), to secure some roots. At that very moment the owner of the potatoes appeared upon the scene and watched us, lost in wonder. He laughed scornfully as we asked his leave to dig up the daisies. He evidently thought, upon seeing the shovel, that we had come for the potatoes, and on being discovered, had tried to cover our retreat with this flimsy show of asking for daisies. He winked as he remarked, "They ain't many folks that hires a wagon to fetch white weeds home."

That Summer we neighbored with the bay and the woods, and with the flowers. On the wall before me hangs a water-color of pink bindweed vines, an armful of them, tangled in meadow grasses. I remember a Summer morning, the day just breaking, still, fresh, dewy, like a baby's waking, when my brother Maurice and I sought for the bindweed blossoms in the meadows by the bay. It was high tide, and the water was creeping through the grasses up to the bindweed vines. That meadow must half forget it is a meadow when the tide is high.

There was a long main street running through the village north and south. Toward the north it led through a sweet-scented wood, to the station. We never chose that road, because it did lead, even though through miles of a ferny, green, and odorous wood,

toward the city's heat and noise. We loved to take the road toward the east, for then the sea always seemed to journey with us. If we lost it when we rode into the valleys, we found it again when we came to the hill-tops ; when the pine woods hid it, still we knew it was there, — its blue expanse, its white-caps, its burden of glittering stars, and the ships on the horizon. Here and there, where the white beaches curved, lay little groups of houses ; along the road the flowers grew thick and sweet, and the beach-grass spread its spears into the tangled thickets of wild roses. Now and then we caught glimpses of calm blue lakes lying in green hollows, and on the distant hills lone little houses stood.

We never drove to the end of that road, though we went miles and miles. We believed that it was like the road in the German story, which went on and on and had no end.

In the village, roads and lanes ran hither and thither, but always somehow reached the bay. Along the roads tiny whitewashed cottages were scattered, — still, peaceful homes, you'd think, yet there had been strange scenes in some of them, for love, anger, wild longings, passions live wherever souls abide.

Of wood-roads there were plenty, crossing and re-crossing, seemingly only for our pleasure, untravelled, grassy, berry-bordered roads, as idle as we. When we

wearied of driving, or rather when some unusual demand called for "the sorrel" and "the gray," we floated in our little sail-boat, the "You and I," about the bay, or flitted through "the opening" into the open sea and out to the bell-buoy. At night, if we waked, we often heard the bell-buoy tolling, or the clock of the high white church on the hill in the next village striking the hour in the stillness.

When we tired of the sea, of the motion of the waves, of the restless bell-buoy, we could still take our way inland rowing on a silent river between the mainland and the island, under a bridge and past tiny islands, and close by little pastures which seemed like folds, or by pine-trees where great crows alighted on the top-branches, or circled about waiting for their weary comrades; and still on, past serried ranks of cat-tails in the swamps, growing in neat rows as if they thought they were rows of corn. Cat-tails never grew in that way in years gone by, I am sure; I think they must have put on airs since they have come into fashion in city homes and studios. Then we glided into a still inland bay,—for we were on a tidal river,—a little salt-water bay that had never seen the sea, nor guessed perhaps of its grand relative. Its shores were low, and along its bank spread marshy meadows in pink browns and golden greens. Along the curving

path of this silvery river we swept into a cove, — with surprise the first time, and always with pleasure, — to find a little house and mill, nestling in such stillness that every sound we made startled the silence. “Our mill,” we called it, for we never saw a soul about the place. Rowing homeward in the early evening we passed over rose-tinted water under the bridge toward the setting sun, while sometimes overhead stood a faint moon.

We made acquaintance too with the great island in the bay, the island of a thousand acres, with steep wooded shores where the beach-plum purples. The grass was blue with berries, and red with the mock cranberry; woodbine garlanded the trees till they looked like bands of wood-nymphs. Where the land lies low between the bay and sea, just at “the opening,” the little gold shells glitter and the scallop-shells tempt the children, and “outside” the real sea-waves tumble and toss, and the bell-buoy lolls and tolls. Captain Kidd’s gold lies on that island. Ah, yes, it does! and when the wind blows high and the night is the darkest, “Hannah Screechum’s” voice rises shrill and wild above the tempest. I never heard it, — I am at home on dark, wild nights, — but Captain Lif’ has heard her time and time again, and he knows.

A pretty grass grows all about the fields and roadsides, the merest threads for stems, with the tiniest of dark-red seeds hanging thick upon them. In the early morning, when the spiders' webs cover the fields, — webs of dewy silver, — this grass shows through the gauze in most exquisite lilac and purple, and the fields seem covered with heliotrope. Yes, the very grasses I know well, for I know my little village as a mother knows her baby.

There is a pleasant walk to the East Bay, over a hill wooded with low pines ; the path winds in and out around bayberry clumps and berry-bushes as if to accommodate them, and many little brown birds are always hopping about there. Though the hill is half a mile from the sea, the little path is all of white sea-sand. Asters, yellow and white, grow there in the late Summer days as freely and as kindly as if they had good earth to sustain them. From the hill you look over great stretches of the purple marsh rosemary, and turning to the left, where the bluffs used to stretch in lonely beauty, lo ! Queen Anne has been there, as the line of red roofs along the far shore tells us.

And here I must introduce Mary Ellen, a member of the family who is specially associated in my mind with this village. One afternoon, several years before we found our country home, going into the par-

lor of our city house, I found a Maltese cat sitting sedately in a chair, as if to receive callers. From that moment of her appearance she became a member of the family. We had had cats by the dozen, but never a cat like this one. We always felt that she was a human being in the form of a cat, and that the spell might be broken at any moment,—for instance, on the seventh day of the seventh month, or by the influence of some special strain of music heard by chance. She possessed something of the spirit of Mr. F's aunt, in the scorn with which she looked upon the follies of the world and the foibles of mankind.

Somehow, I don't remember just how it was, the name of Mary Ellen settled upon her. It should have been Thomas, but as Dick said, since that name has descended upon her, let it pass for a *nom de plume*. So his name was Mary Ellen, and not being able to break the meshes of habit, we always spoke of him as "she."

As I said, she at once became a member of the family. We had small doubt that she could talk had she chosen. Her face was very expressive, and she was evidently full of thoughts; but she adopted the plan, so to speak, of communicating with us through interpreters, employing us by turn as mediums, and availing herself of our services as a busy man uses

a typewriter. She freely took part in the family discussions and conversations. Subjects approached in a gingerly manner by other members of the family, — personal matters — she struck directly at.

The mediums spoke with a peculiar accent, and in a tone slightly resembling a mew. Any sentiment expressed in this tone was known at once to be Mary Ellen's.

The youngest member of the family, who often fretted under pointed remarks from his elders on toilet and table manners, received orders from Mary Ellen, unruffled.

If some hesitation was shown about giving Maurice permission to go to a base-ball match a mile away, Mary Ellen would perhaps remark, through Dick, "There are those who forget that they were once young;" or if an older brother knew it was not a fit place for the little brother, Mary Ellen's "Mejum" would say, "Never think of it, — base-ball! *base*-ball! Why, the evil is written on its very face! I shall not attend to-day myself. When I go, you shall." The little boy would laugh and give in, when he would have balked at an ordinary denial.

Mary Ellen did not spare the weakness even of the elders of the family. "There is a gentleman in this State," she would say, "not to mention county

or town, or narrow it to this room, who has carried an important letter, unmailed, in his pocket for three days. Let me never hear of this sort of thing again ! You know a letter is not a jack-knife or a lead-pencil, to live in a pocket ; it is written to send somewhere." Then father would laugh. He had been known to say at other times, "Dear me, those letters ! Well, why will you give me letters to mail when the house is full of boys?"

She once gave a description of herself. "I am, to begin with, *a cat*, — a Maltese cat ; I suppose a Knight of Malta very likely, but called by the unlearned, Malty. I am a *multum in parvo*, an *e pluribus unum*, which I will explain. I have a tongue which can lap ; it is also a comb ; the other side of it is a soft brush, a pink flesh-brush, a dish-towel. I have a good supply of liquid soap in my mouth, which I take to be "Babbitt's Best." My eyes gaze equally well upon the sunlit day or moonlit night. I wear a white diamond on my breast ; diamonds are valuable, — mine is an inch each way. When I sit down I have well-filled pockets on each side, — I should judge there was a large orange in each one ; but strange and inexplicable as it may appear, as soon as I rise to get an orange to present to a friend, pockets and oranges alike disappear. Since some of the arts are lost, and some of the

tribes are lost, I suppose I need not wonder that my pockets are lost. When I am short of subjects, I often think of these things. Some folks don't know about them, and so of course they can't think of them."

One Spring, the lease of our city house having expired, we took another not many blocks away. After a day or two Mary Ellen was missing. We would have advertised for our beauty with a reward, but that a friend of ours who had done that, giving an exact description of her yellow cat, was made wretched for a week by having dozens of cats brought to her house, of every variety, from young kittens to old veterans of the fences, black, striped, gray, of every color except yellow.

Finally Maurice and I bethought ourselves of going to one of our neighbors in the street we had left. She inquired of her cook, who declared she knew the cat, and had seen her about the yard and fences. "A very large wild Malty cat." We could n't imagine Mary Ellen wild, but we offered the cook a reward if she would entice this Maltese cat into the cellar.

One night a servant came to say that the cat was caught. They had set a saucer of milk just inside the cellar door, and then shut the door from the outside. "But," said the girl, "Mrs. Holden says you can't get her now, she is afraid ; for Mrs. Holden and all the

boarders have been down calling her ; and she is behind the furnace where all the empty tin cans are, a-howling most awful."

Maurice and I went at once to the house. The "boarders" had retired to their rooms, and silence reigned in the cellar. At the top of the cellar stairs I stood and called, "Mary Ellen, Mary Ellen, poor old pussy!"

A shriek of joy, a meow of delight ; the tomato-cans could be heard rolling in all directions ; a scramble, and up the stairs flew Mary Ellen, and jumped into my arms. The cook was astonished ; she "never see anything like it," she said. Mary Ellen let the family pat her, and then she went to Maurice, who carried her home in his arms purring as she cuddled up to him. She could never hear tomato-cans referred to afterward, — that subject she wished to be blotted out from the topics of conversation, also "boarders."

Mary Ellen had never been in the country before the year we bought the cottage. We had often remembered her by sending fresh catnip to her in letters when we were away, so that she had some inkling of the joys of country life ; but now that we were to have a house, of course she was to go, — she and the setter pup Don, whose sworn enemy she was.

I laugh now when I think of the carriage in which

we went to the station, Mary Ellen and I ; for no one of the family would go in the carriage with us. She got out of the shawl in which she was wrapped, and scrambled all over the carriage ; it was a Maltese carriage by the time we got out. I gave the driver a good extra fee to brush the hairs off, but it's on my conscience that I did n't give him half enough.

At the station I met Maurice with his pup, which was all wriggle and paws, with a stick for a tail. I had entirely concealed Mary Ellen in the shawl, but it was an animated bundle that I bore. In one corner of the station Maurice suggested that he should put the few things from his valise into my bag, and that we then put Mary Ellen into the valise. We did it, and instead of locking the valise we only tied the handles together, to give her air. Then when the train was ready, I walked bravely out with my bag, through the opening of which sometimes a gray nose sniffed, and sometimes a gray tail waved or a gray paw clawed, covered by the shawl over my arm.

In the car I put the valise on the seat beside me. The rest of the family were ashamed of us, and sat quite at the other end of the car. As the conductor reached out for my ticket, the bag rolled off the seat ; he politely picked it up. At once it rolled off the seat again ; he picked it up once more ; but before

he could move on, it was a third time at his feet, and as he stooped to take it, a veritable spit sounded from its depths, and a gray paw struck at him. Maurice, the conductor, and I, all laughed outright, as the valise rolled on the floor.

The morning after our arrival, I looked out of the window and saw Mary Ellen plunging clumsily, head first, down the trunk of a big cherry-tree. Right behind her a striped cat, who had apparently been giving her lessons in bird-killing, was coming down slowly, sailor-fashion, head up, paw after paw. Poor city Mary Ellen !

In a yard across the street I saw hens complacently clucking about in an enclosure surrounded by a fish-net stretched between poles. After breakfast, Maurice showed me a bird's nest in an apple-tree. A little brown bird owned it, and the nest was woven chiefly of bleached ribbons of the seaweed. We had seen that same sort of little bird in the White Mountains, and her nest there was made of silver birch bark stripped fine.

Mary Ellen was an apt pupil ; she soon brought a big, strange-looking bird into the house. It had a large beak ; but it was tailless. We rescued it from her, and I kept it in my room for several days, feeding it carefully. No one knew what sort of bird it was,

if not a young owl; but young owls have tails. Mary Ellen felt the loss of her victim very keenly, and sat all day by my door, hoping for a chance to recapture it.

Then the bird died, and Maurice dug it a grave and buried it under the big willow. Mary Ellen followed the remains as chief mourner, and could hardly be prevailed upon to leave the spot. The next day Hilda, in sweeping Maurice's room, moved the bed, and behind it, in a far corner, found the bird's tail. Mary Ellen looked thoughtful when it was shown to her, but she made no explanations.

Often poor town-bred Mary Ellen sat in the doorway and gazed earnestly and solemnly at the long row of willows along the fence. As the leaves trembled and quivered, her face grew sharp and her little nose twitched, — they tempted her as birds in motion would; but if a breeze sprang up and the boughs swayed, and the whole lithe tree waked to life, she was startled, her ears lay back, she glared with her green eyes, then suddenly she would turn and fly upstairs to hide till her fright was over. She had never known trees before, or rather, she felt that these were wild untamed creatures, not like the stiff young maples in our city street, which lived in green wooden cages and could n't get at her.

One day, a little cousin who was visiting at our house was kept indoors by a cold, and to amuse him I made a bonnet for Mary Ellen. It was called an opera bonnet, as it had a great deal of white lace, blue strings, a red rose, and a big ostrich-feather. She wore with it, over the face, a black-lace veil dotted with beads. About her shoulders she had a plaid blue-and-white silk handkerchief. She began to walk backward as soon as she was put upon the floor, remarking that she had often heard of back-sliders, but had never been one before, and singing as she backed, —

“ Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight ! ”

She said she was in the right, because ladies always back out of Victoria's drawing-room ; and that if one can back out of a bargain, why not back out of a bonnet ?

Soon after this a neighbor whose little sister had been ill came to borrow Mary Ellen to show her in her gorgeous array to the invalid ; so Mary Ellen was decked out and went off in the young lady's arms. Hardly halfway to her destination, overcome with fright, she struggled away from Miss Helen, and fled to parts unknown. This was in the morning, and nothing more was seen of the poor pussy that day, though Miss Helen brought home the ostrich-plume,

the little girl from across the street found the red rose and the veil in her barn, and the shawl was fluttering over the grass.

The next morning when Hilda opened the kitchen door at dawn, there sat Mary Ellen, jaded and haggard, her soft fur rough and brushed up the wrong way, and her tail full of burrs. The opera bonnet was still tied round her neck, only the blue bow of the strings was behind, and the bonnet hung in front like a bib. She was generally rather loquacious, and willing to describe scenes through which she had passed; but of this escapade she refused to disclose anything. Her spirit declined to speak through the mediums; and the details of that adventure will have to stand along with Sir John Franklin's exploration, and the names of those who built the Pyramids.

Mary Ellen assumed such high and mighty airs that it amused the family to help her carry out her plans. There was one chair, easy above all the other easy-chairs, in which she always settled herself. When she walked solemnly into the parlor, whoever happened to be in that chair would rise and offer it to her, and she always accepted it as her right, without thanks. But there was one person — my mother — who not only would not give it up to her, but would push her out when she wanted the chair herself. Then Mary Ellen

would sit facing her on the floor, glaring at her with green glassy eyes till her patience was exhausted or her indignation had cooled, when she would take the next best place. She was supposed on this account to cherish rooted animosity to my mother ; and one day she wrote an essay, one of the boys being the medium this time, with the title, "Pride must have a fall."

"I don't wish to call persons out by name," said she ; "but there is one present whose pride is too high. Some day she 'll fall, — she 'll fall out of a certain chair if she is n't humbler. Cats were sacred among the Egyptians ; *you* never were. Your clothes don't fit well ; mine do, — just see how they fit round my eyes and claws. You have only one life ; I have nine. You may not look upon a king ; I can."

Mary Ellen loved a siesta in a certain low clump of lilacs by the fence, so Maurice put an old knit shawl in its depths ; and almost always, if she was not in the parlor, and was called, she would emerge from "the bower which Eveline wove," as she called it. If a newspaper was put upon the floor, tent-fashion, she would at once go and sit under it, remarking, "Speaking of caves, how is Machpelah getting on?" Sometimes we bought clams for her, and while they were cooking (for she would not eat them raw) she would sit on a kitchen chair and inhale the fragrant steam,

sniffing and wiggling her nose. I've seen her eat a live eel, remarking as we passed, "Why gaze at me? A former queen of the Sandwich Islands sat in a yellow satin gown and ate a squirming fish."

Once Mary Ellen had a habit of lying on the window-seat against the mosquito netting; it was only cotton netting, and as she lolled against it, it sagged with her weight and made a sort of little hammock. The Venetian shade was down one day, and a guest, who was calling, sat with her back against the blind. Suddenly, just at the lady's shoulder a loud sneeze was heard. She sprang from her seat; we all ran to the window, where a struggle was going on behind the shade; and pulling this aside, we saw the netting give way and Mary Ellen's portly form descend to the ground with a thud! The lady was a stranger and had never met Mary Ellen; and as she did not see the cat, yet heard us cry, "Oh, it was Mary Ellen!" we always felt from her manner afterward, although we made a full explanation, that she had saddled us with a crazy relative who stood outside the parlor windows and sneezed at callers.

In the Fall, when we went back to the city, Mary Ellen went in her shawl. As we entered the station, whom should we see sitting there but Senator Charles Sumner. He soon rose from his chair and went out

upon the platform. Mary Ellen in her gray fur gown at once jumped into the chair, and sat there as calmly as if she felt that it was as well filled as before. She often alluded to that journey as "the time Charles Sumner and I sat in the same chair," or "the day when Charles Sumner and I travelled up from our town," — boasting of her fine associates, after the fashion of her betters.

For six Summers Mary Ellen accompanied us to the cottage, and grew familiar with the journey and with all the pleasures of country life. At the end of that sixth Summer my father and Tom had gone up to vote. My mother and Hilda had preceded them, for we were again moving into a new house, and much had to be done ; and Sarah the cook was left with Maurice and me to close the house.

To "close the house" meant to get the various odds and ends up to the city ; and the list comprised Don, Mary Ellen, Cousin Kitty's guitar, a bundle of canes and umbrellas, a great armful of mossy branches and twigs, handbags and shawls. There were three of us to divide the spoils. It was easy enough getting to the station, but getting into the cars was quite another affair. The stage-driver took a part of our bundles in his arms, and led the procession up the car aisle, facing the passengers. Everybody smiled. We cer-

tainly looked like a travelling circus with trained animals. Mary Ellen stuck her head out of her shawl; Don got under our feet. After we were settled in the seat at the farthest extremity, a jocose woman walked the whole length of the car to present me with one small cone that had dropped from my pine-branches.

At last we reached the city. Sarah took a carriage with the inanimate objects, and Maurice and I shared a carriage with Don and Mary Ellen. It was a weary drive. Every time the carriage swayed, Mary Ellen thought Don was coming to attack her, and she kept herself in a warlike attitude during the entire drive, with a perfectly tigerish expression on her face.

We descended from the carriage and entered the new house. Mary Ellen gazed around her in despair; this was not home. She sprang from my arms, rushed into the dining-room, thence into the pantry, jumped into the dumb-waiter, which was unfastened, descended with a terrible thump and a clatter of spoons and forks to the lower regions, fled through the open door before the astonished Hilda's eyes, and never was seen again by the eyes that had beheld her so long. We always had considered her as some one transformed, and so, since the time of her departure, we

have often thought we discovered traces of her expression or voice or manner in people we have met. There was one old lady of whom we had strong suspicions ; a sudden twitching of the nose, and the way she caught her ball of worsted when it fell upon the floor, were very suggestive. It was a suspicious circumstance also that the old lady wore blue glasses to conceal her eyes. Of course it was impossible to ask the question, and so the mystery remains ; but we think — nothing can prevent us from thinking — well, I was always good to her, and it was n't a month after she went that I made Allan's acquaintance. Let those carp who will.

Don the setter — who was also our comrade for years, and who was taken back and forth to the country every year — was as mild as a May morning, except to hens. My mother was not fond of animals, but Don was determined to gain her favor. Several times one Summer he brought in a dead hen and presented it to her. Not meeting with the reward he had expected, he brought one day, by the legs, a fine white hen, alive and cackling with terror. We inquired for the owner diligently, but he never was found, and we presented the hen to one of our neighbors. Don received so many whippings for killing hens, that at last he arranged a little plan for his own pleasure.

When he saw a hen, he would dash at her and squeeze her till she "squawked," and then let her go in a cloud of loose feathers.

One season there was a "dry spell," and as there were few wells in the region, people looked on their cisterns and hogsheads of water as on gold. One afternoon, while taking a drive, we passed a little house all shut up, as if the family were out for the afternoon. Don made a raid into the yard, and jumped into a great sunk tub of water by the kitchen door, where he wallowed and splashed and stirred up its depths as only a setter can ; then he flew on after us. When we came back at dusk, the house was open ; a woman was setting a table in the kitchen, and we saw a man carrying a pail of water into the kitchen door, — we hoped not for the tea-kettle ! I've always felt mean when I've passed that house since then.

Don was a very mild dog, as I have said ; but one morning, as he was lying in the kitchen door, a "vegetable man" suddenly turning the corner startled him from his nap. He flew at the man, caught him by the trousers, and ripped one leg nearly up to the waist. The man shrieked ; and that sent Hilda flying into the parlor. My mother, taking it for granted that the man was bitten and that he was very angry, ventured to the door to ask about it. There stood the

“vegetable man” holding the cloth about his leg, and when he saw her he asked in a very mild tone if she would please lend him a thread and needle. “I really must apologize,” he said, “for coming so suddenly upon the dog. He is quite excusable; but I regret this rent, because I have on my best pants. My wife insisted on my wearing them, as I was coming to the village; but it can’t be helped now.”

Hilda gave him a stout thread and needle, and he sat on the back step and “sewed himself up.” Meanwhile, my mother, quite taken aback by his mild manner, sought out a pair of my oldest brother’s trousers and brought them to him and gave him two dollars.

“I am under great obligations to you, ma’am,” said he. “These pants I have only cost three fifty, and the pair you have given me are worth fully that. I am afraid my wife will think I have overreached you. You must let me give you a basket of pears.”

My mother insisted on buying the pears, and he went off in very high spirits, saying, “Don’t blame the dog; he was entirely excusable, entirely.”

Some weeks after this my brother couldn’t find a certain pair of trousers that he wanted to wear. They were almost new, he said; and he was sure he left them in his closet when he went to the city.

My mother opened her eyes at me. "Were they expensive trousers?" she asked.

"No," said he, "I only paid twelve dollars for them ; but they were new, and I liked them."

The fate of those trousers became a family mystery.

"Don't look at me in that insulting way when you speak of those trousers," Mary Ellen would say, through Maurice, who had no idea where the trousers had gone. "I always wear clear gray myself, and neither borrow nor lend."

Don never told, though he might have excused himself on the same ground.

Don could never get walking enough. He would come and beg the boys to take him out ; he could n't bear to walk alone. If Tom said, "Maurice, do you want to go for a walk?" Don would start out of the deepest sleep and be ready on the instant. When they did not wish his company, they would spell, "Do you want to go for a walk?" In a few days he learned the meaning of the syllables. You might spell a long string of words, while he stood staring intently at you, and the instant "D-o y-o-u w-a-n-t," was introduced, he was frantic with eagerness to be off. Always after prayers my father took him for a walk. He began to look on morning devotions as a necessary but foolish preliminary to a promenade, as the cat

in "Middlemarch" looked on the setting of the tea-table as a foolish preliminary to her saucer of milk. When morning prayers began, Don always sat sedately in the corner with a heavy and serious countenance. As the prayer approached its end, his interest quickened, his ears stood up, and finally when "Amen" was pronounced, he burst from his place with a wild yelp of joy, — Amen meaning in his ears, "Come on, old fellow, it is time for our walk." He was a spoiled dog, the baby of the family, and obeyed only the dictates of his own sweet will. He always insisted on going to the bay with us when we went sailing, though having by experience found him an uncomfortable shipmate in a small boat, we tried to shut him in the barn before we left.

But one day, before setting out for a sail, we could not find him. When we reached the bay, however, there he was, slinking round the boat-house. He evaded us till we were well off, when he ran around the shore, expecting to meet us on the other side. Seeing, after a minute, that we did not mean to land on the opposite shore, he flung himself into the water and swam for the boat. Then he tried to scramble up the side, wailing, dripping, shivering, whining, till Maurice could stand it no longer; and making us all sit on one side, he dragged the wretched creature into

the boat, and up on the deck, where Don proceeded to shake himself, much to my mother's disgust.

As he continued to shiver, Maurice got from the cabin an old ulster and put it on him. He put Don's fore-legs into the sleeves, turned up the cuffs, buttoned the coat up in front, and then made him sit in the corner of the seat by the cabin. There he sat, warmed and comfortable, but with his head wet and a despondent expression on his face, the funniest old mariner ever seen.

Maurice made up a story for him of a shipwreck on the brig "Mary Ellen," — how he was anxious to get home to his widowed mother and seven young children, whose only support he was; how he lost his chest and his ship, — and there he sat, the water dripping from his chin and nose, looking as if he knew every word of it was true, and was indorsing it by his solemn attention.

Elinor and Douglas never tire of hearing of Don and his adventures; they know him from his photograph, sent us by the friend to whom he was given. They were very sober when they heard that he had died, at an advanced age; and though I had not seen the dear old fellow for years, it gave me a pang to know that he had left the world.

That first Summer, — there have been sixteen Sum-

mers since, — we never went on an errandless drive ; there was a chronic errand, — andirons and spinning-wheels.

One day, in the woods, we met an old man driving an open wagon. He was the old man who “brought fruit round,” and both he, and his horse with the false tail, were familiar objects in the village. This day he was “carting” herring and strawberries.

“The man in the wilderness he asked me
How many strawberries grew in the sea ;
And I answered him, as I thought good,
As many red herring as grow in the wood.”

We had never expected to meet that historic person ; yet here he was.

Another day we chose a long road which led up toward a point of high land, from which we had heard there was a most beautiful view ; but to see it we must pass through the private grounds belonging to the great mansion on the bluff. We stopped a man on the road to ask him if the owner of the place allowed people to drive through his grounds. He looked us carefully over. “Well,” said he, after a pause, “you can go ; the gate ain’t locked, and he won’t hurt yer. For myself, I should n’t venture. He is one of them big bugs, — nobody ain’t good enough for him ; he is what’s called an obstreperous man.”

Tom took up the reins, the sorrel adjusted his joints for a start, but the man lingered ; he had evidently something on his mind.

“The fact is,” he said, “that when that house was done, the day the folks moved in, my wife, who’s a very neighborly sort of a woman, says to me, ‘I’ve moved twice, and I know how it is, and I’ve a mind to send Anson up with two of my fresh pies this mornin’ ; if I was new here, I’d thank them for doing it for me.’ My wife’s a great pie-baker. So up she sent ’em, and pretty soon little Anson comes back with fifty cents for the pies. I never see my wife so worked up. She cried, and I was mad ; for Anson said he told ’em they was a present. So that evenin’ I took the two quarters and I went up myself and asked for the owner. He come out, very grand, but he could n’t scare me ; and so I told him that we was neighbors, and the pies was a present. And he says, ‘Thank you, but my wife prefers to pay for them.’ So I flung the quarters on the table, and says I, ‘I’m no pie-pedler ; I’m an American citizen, and I s’posed you was.’ And I went home.”

Poor fellow, the iron of that bitter sarcasm about the American citizen he was sure had entered into the soul of the haughty aristocrat. We sympathized with him. We told him that we wished his wife had sent

the pies to us; and then we drove on. We didn't care to "see the view."

We could see the mansion-house across the water from our cottage. All that day we looked at it with a certain awe, as if a flaming sword guarded the gateway. The owner of the house possessed a sort of fascination for us, so near and yet so far he seemed from our little world. We began to make merry over him; we wondered if he tasted the pies and liked them. We tested everything we owned by his imagined standard. We learned that his name was Brampton-Wells. Tom called him Stratford-on-Avon. Judging from the hyphen, that blow of "the man's" had been a light one. An American citizen — why, that was no glory to him, probably.

During the Summer we received a letter from a friend of ours who lived abroad, saying that her cousin, Mrs. Brampton-Wells, had a Summer house in the town where we were living, and that she should write to her to call on us.

That made us merrier. We knew our friend would forget to write, we knew the letter could n't reach town that season if she did; but we began to prepare subjects of conversation. Of course we must n't mention "trading" with the old man with the false-tailed horse for "sickle pears," nor speak of buying peanuts, freshly

roasted, from the "baker's cart." We decided that we would let my father read Homer aloud while Mr. and Mrs. Brampton-Wells were knocking at the door, and that different members of the family should enter the room during the call, asking for Browning, Emerson, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. There was a wide field for conjecture, as we did n't know on what they prided themselves.

If Mrs. Brampton-Wells called, my cousin Kitty was to speak of Worth as being her dressmaker (Kitty had one of her aunt's dresses, which came from him, made over twice for herself), or to allude to a relative who had been of high rank in the Revolutionary army. Kitty thought she'd speak too of the *portièrre* she saw in Paris, made from the yellow satin gown of the Emperor of China. Maurice said he'd ask if anything had been heard of the lost *Pleiad* lately.

Tom said he had thought it hard enough to live up to his mother's standard ; but he'd give in even to this new one, if Mrs. Brampton-Wells would dare to walk for a quarter of a mile in front of his mother. She always took exception to our gait, or to the set of our clothes, and she would often say to us, but especially to Tom, who had had a good law practice for years, "Hold up your head," or "Turn out your feet, dear ;

throw back your shoulders." She could never believe we were not children.

As the whole family could not get into the carriage at once, we would say that one or another must stay at home to-day for fear Mr. Brampton-Wells might call. That has been a good little joke ; it has lasted well.

Once in a while nowadays we wonder if Mrs. Brampton-Wells will notice if we turn the skirt of a dress, or if Mr. Brampton-Wells will approve the cut of a new coat. We don't know whether the gentleman is alive or dead ; we never saw his face ; but for us he is immortal.

Mrs. Smith, the friend who had given us the setter pup, was very much interested in our little house. As soon as we were settled, we asked her to visit us. A few days before she came, she sent us a big box of plants from the greenhouse "to adorn the garden." We had not dreamed of having a garden. Portulaca seed had been scattered through the grass the year before, and now the bright little flowers of every color peeped up here and there. My mother wanted a rockery, and as there were no stones to speak of on our land, we had had a cart-load brought from the beach ; but the earth was poor, the plants withered away, and the rockery became a jest and a by-word. When Cousin

Ferris came to see us he thought it was one of those places mentioned in Scripture, where every one passing by wagged the head and cast a stone.

We had tried to have a little bed of nasturtiums near the front door. Maurice spaded it up and enriched the earth; but Mary Ellen at once chose it for a resting-place, and for hours would lie stretched at length in the soft retreat, and the seeds declined to come up. We remonstrated with her, and stuck little sticks in the flower-bed; but she scratched them up and took her siesta as usual. She remarked that "the ones who first called it a bed were the ones to quarrel with; she'd never thought of lying there till she heard it spoken of as a *bed*, and then she felt she was only doing the appropriate thing to lie upon it." So we gave up the nasturtiums.

When Mrs. Smith's present came, we at once had a great bed made in the front yard, rounded up with a high mound of rich earth, and then the thrifty plants were set out, some in flowering glory. My father did the work; but we instructed him if he saw Mr. Brampton-Wells coming, to rush into the side-yard and lie down in the hammock with the Greek Testament in his hand; or if he should be actually caught at work, to speak in a broad Irish brogue, as if he were the gardener.

Mrs. Smith arrived. We were so glad that the big mound was done. After tea we sat in the little parlor, each watching the other's mouths to get a chance to speak, when my father said, "Oh, turn your head, Mrs. Smith, and see the beautiful flowers you sent us, set out and thriving finely."

She looked out of the window, then turned to us with a blank expression. We looked out too, and there, where the fine mound had been, was a great deep hole, while Don, with all his soul in his work, was industriously throwing out the last of our fine garden with his hind-legs.

We never tried to have a flower-garden after that first Summer. But what need of a garden when the fields all around us were bright with flowers, — lupines and great pink marshmallows, and mulleins reigning in velvet grandeur, — where rosemary purpled the marsh meadows, and roses, daisies, yes, and cardinal-flowers too in their season, abounded along lanes and roads? Ah me, how clearly we remember the days when we went gypsying!

VI.

LIFE was never dull to Tibbie. After the heroes had sailed to one far port and another, a cat interest arose. "Tommy Barn" had died, and the family were "short of cats," as Douglas said. A neighbor who had an over-supply of kittens presented Tibbie with a yellow one that was introduced under the name of Mr. Yellow. He was a mild "beastie," and would allow Elinor to build block-houses around him, and sleep calmly just where she placed him. Tibbie soon developed the talent of the "Pied Piper," and from church and shop, kittens and cats appeared in her train. "Thomas Shannon," a striped, plump kitten, was named for our nurse's brother, and "Robin McNair" for a friend of Tibbie's. Then a melancholy gray cat appeared one morning sitting on the kitchen window-sill. She was a good fat cat, but of a sad frame of mind, so that she even paused in her meals to call attention to her woes like a street beggar, willy-nilly; and we named her "Mrs. Gummidge."

Two wild cats from the barn became domesticated, and lay in the kitchen with easy minds, as if it were a sort of cats' club-room. The wild cats we called "Granny Gray" and the "Wild Daughter." It was a common occurrence, but always an exciting one, when kittens arrived. When Tibbie came into the nursery with her apron gathered up in her hand, that meant kittens. The choosing followed, and then the naming, and invariably a near day of loud lamenting over the sudden and unaccountable absence of the larger number of the treasures. Tibbie gave a distinct personality to each cat. Granny Gray Tibbie represented as a most devoted mother and amiable old lady. At one time the Wild Daughter had kittens. Mysterious disappearances, sudden disasters, thinned the family down to one, a certain "Bobby White." Granny, realizing that her daughter was young and flighty, and with the usual tenderness of a grandmother, adopted Bobby, and let his mother lie for long naps in luxurious ease in Tibbie's kitchen.

One day the sad news came to the nursery that Bobby White was very ill. The children went out to the barn with Tibbie, where she had arranged a nice little hospital, with bits of old carpet, and a saucer of milk in which catnip had been steeped. Tibbie helped the children up the ladder, and then they saw

the strange sight of little Bobby White lying between his grandmother and his mother. First one cat and then the other would lick his pretty fur ; but there was no help either in love or catnip for Bobby, and he soon stretched out his little legs and died.

“ ‘T was a sad and yet an improvin’ sight,” said Tibbie to me, “to see them twa wise folk o’ cats a-sittin’ by their deid. The human beasties that neglects their bairns could gaze wi’ profit an’ gang away wi’ bowed heid.”

A neighbor who owned a fine Jersey cow had not sufficient pasturage for her in his yard, so we invited the cow to be a guest in our orchard and back-yard. We had not expected to provide her with social joys ; but Tibbie, with her love of animals, at once took the cow into her affections and spent a good deal of time in her society. About every half hour she pulled up the stake and led the cow to fresh fields and pastures new. She watered her till I thought there could n’t be a drop of milk left in her. She selected apples for her. The cow soon looked upon her as a dear friend, and lowed with joy whenever she appeared.

One day the great barn door was open, and also the back door which led out into the fields, that were owned by a German farmer and were then green with thrifty

tomato-plants. Mistress Moolly pulled up her stake and went unseen by any of us through the barn, and hurried over the fields, — doubtless, poor mother, in search of her calf, which the day before had been taken from her. Tibbie supposed that the owner had sent for the cow, and till she happened to be in the barn late in the afternoon she did not know that Moolly had fled. As she stood in the back door, she saw two men hurrying over the field. They came to her with the sad tale that the cow had destroyed five dollars' worth of the plants. They took the cow to her own home, and the cow's master settled with them for the mischief she had done. But Tibbie was uneasy, and felt that she had not kept her eye as she might on the "beastie."

One day shortly after this, Tibbie flew upstairs in terror. It was a busy day; I had guests, and every moment was worth a great deal to me.

"The cow has gone again," said Tibbie.

I hurried downstairs; Douglas looked in the coal-shed, in the trees, over the fence, and down the street. We ran to the barn. The back door was locked. She must have jumped over the fence. In despair I told Tibbie to put on her hat and run to the village to tell the owner the news.

"Oh, dear," said the "lady of the house" when

she heard Tibbie's message. "How much trouble we have put you to!" And she sent out word to the boy in the barn to go and hunt up the cow.

"Run away!" said the boy, "where to?"

"Where, to be sure?" said Tibbie.

"She couldn't jump a five-foot fence," said the boy.

"It's no more nor three foot," said Tibbie.

The boy opened the back-door of the barn where he sat, and looked out. There was the cow contentedly grazing in a little yard enclosed with a high board-fence.

"Hoo did she git here?" demanded Tibbie, in great surprise. "She must hae leaped our front gate an' come home by the road."

"She never's been to your house," said the boy. "Mr. William told me not to take her to-day."

Then Tibbie remembered that she had n't seen the cow that morning. She described the scene to me when she returned, almost breathless.

"I war more amazed to see that cow than war Saul when he descried his father's asses approachin'," she said; "an' noo to my dinner."

We began to feel as if we were to have a regular succession of ages under Tibbie, like the Paleozoic

and Mesozoic. After the cat era and the cow era, came the hen era.

As fate would have it, we owned a hen-yard ; and when one of our neighbors who was leaving town wanted to sell his hens, it seemed the most appropriate thing for us to buy them. Thenceforth, Tibbie thought of little but hens. She fairly lived in the hen-house ; and bran-pudding and corn and crumbs took the lead of food for the family. Tibbie had the "hen fever." Now we were to have eggs and pressed chicken. She placed unwilling hens on nests, and insisted on their "setting." She chased them back to business if they were caught strolling about ; and finally the hens gave in and consented to "set." Forty young chickens came out ; and Tibbie became more deeply interested than before.

"Six hens and forty chickens," said Tibbie, in triumph.

One night we were roused from slumber by the sounds of warfare, — growling under the window, barking in the back-yard, sudden "squawks," ominous silences.

"It is a dog eating the chickens," said I ; "and good luck to him ! May he eat up the whole forty !"

But in the morning only twenty were found dead.

Instead of lessening Tibbie's vigilance, the need of guarding the remnant was more apparent than before. The hens were chased into the yard every afternoon and locked up, but the number lessened day by day. One day Elinor, in going to the barn, passed by one old hen that was scratching vigorously for a large brood of chickens. The child tripped, and the old hen, terrified for her chickens' safety, flew right in the little girl's face, pecking and flapping her wings furiously. A roar of terror and pain reached Tibbie's ears. She rushed out and rescued the "lassie," who was borne into the house in a very limp condition. Strange to say, the old hen had scratched her little cheeks and beat her wings in her face till the whites of her eyes were bloodshot. For some time Elinor classed hens among wild beasts!

Finally between dogs and rats and cats and an occasional family feast, the number of hens was reduced to three. One of these had stolen a nest under the barn late in the Fall, against Tibbie's remonstrances, and produced one chicken, the feet of which had been frozen, and he clumped about on two clawless pegs. I could hardly resist throwing a penny to the poor little image as I passed him bravely stumping down the path.

One day Allan, happening to hear an Irishman in

the village say that he was going into the "hen trade," presented him with the few remaining fowls. And so we were left with an empty hen-yard again.

Tibbie was generosity itself ; but her sense of justice was very keen. Not a hair's breadth would she allow herself to be overreached. She was exceedingly angry at the boys that slipped into the yard and stole fruit, and was always laying traps for them. One night she heard some one shaking the pear-tree near the kitchen, — a tree which bore delicious early pears, — and she at once flew out with a bundle of kindling-wood which she threw recklessly into the tree. The boys hastily retreated over the back fence. She then gathered the pears on the ground, and kept a light in her window all night as a warning to the boys. Before dawn she rose and cleared the tree and the grass of fallen fruit. Shortly after this she was rejoiced to see two little colored girls — sisters of the marauders of the night before, as she suspected — come in at the large gate with a great basket and proceed to the pear-tree and begin to search in the grass for pears.

"Guid-mornin'," said Tibbie's voice at the kitchen door.

"Good-mornin'," said the biggest girl ; "please ma'am, may we have some pears?"

“Surely,” said Tibbie, “why not? Help yourselves; there’s a ladder if you wish to climb the tree.”

She stood at the door and watched them as they picked up a few gnarly or decayed pears and threw them away.

“Perhaps,” she suggested, “that tree hasn’t bore this year.”

“Oh, yes, it has,” replied the little girls; “it was full last night.”

“Hoo do you know?” asked Tibbie, severely. “Noo gang awa’ an’ tell your brithers frae me that all our fruit-trees is to be swished o’er wi’ a wash of parish green; and I hope they’ll come and eat all the pears they want.”

There was a dangerous light in Tibbie’s eye, I imagine, for the little girls suddenly, as she told me, took to their heels and fled.

Tibbie’s return from one of her trips to the city was an exciting time, though the excitement really began before she started. After having decided to go on a certain morning train, she would proceed to lay out work enough to keep her at home all day; perhaps she would decide to make raisin-cake, — the stoning of the raisins alone occupying at least an hour, — or she would take Elinor’s best big collars to iron. Once,

after the raisins were stoned, she realized that either her journey or the cake must be given up, and she stayed at home to finish the cake ; another time she put the things away, even after she had sifted the flour.

On these occasions I would send the nurse flying to the kitchen to say that if she were going on the eleven o'clock train she must hurry, as it was nearly eleven. "More haste, less speed," she would reply coolly. About ten minutes before the train left she would dash to her room and reappear, fresh and blooming, flurried but confident.

"Tibbie," I would call as she left the house, "you can't catch that train."

"Surely I must," she would reply, and start to run down the street.

Then she would of course arrive too late, and have to sit an hour in the station. Once, thinking it a pity to waste the time there waiting for the next train, she returned home and with her bonnet on assisted the nurse in getting lunch, — and was too late for the next train.

She always came to my room, on her return from the city, to relate her adventures, and Allan always made an errand there to hear the story. She would stand in the doorway with her purchases in her arms, introduce each package to me and state the reason for buying each article.

She was once very much amused by a clerk's trying to urge upon her a pair of long buttonless kid gloves. "I asket him," said Tibbie, "if he took me for a fule, a-paying for kid that was poked awa' up under me sleeves, or did he think I'd wear it all wrinkled aboot me arm, like a stockin' wi'out a garter; sae I just left the shop an' gaed awa' to 'Eight Aveney,' where I asket for some lisle-thread gloves. I asket a young fellow for them, and instead o' fetchin' them, he just leant quite over the counter, an' says he, 'Lass, when cam ye frae Glasky?' I was quite took aback, for I've clear forgot all my Scotch speech, sae I replied tae him, 'Hoo kenned ye that I cam frae Glasky at a'?' Says he, smilin', 'Lass, ye'r speech bewrayeth ye,' an' then stretchin' his han' across tae me, says he, 'I've been three weeks oot; an' this is the first word I've heard o' Glasky speech. Gie me your han', lass; when frien's meet, hearts warm.' We had a verra pleasant discourse," added Tibbie, "an' he desired me to call in again an' have another conference wi' him. He didna ken any o' my folk, but I discoursed wi' him on the Burns Monument an' on St. George's Cross. He'd bought things at all the shops at Glasky, an' he'd been tae Mr. Dunlop's church; so it was all verra consolin' tae him, puir laddie."

Sometimes Tibbie would come home lugging a great market-basket which she had borrowed from her cousin, full of things she thought would tempt our appetites, and which we could not get in our town. Once she saw what she thought to be a remarkably cheap dish-pan and tin dipper; and she bore them along with her great armful of paper packages. If she promised to come home the same night, we were as sure of her coming as of the darkness itself. But once she failed to appear; the late trains came in, but no Tibbie. I felt anxious and fearful that some ill had overtaken her.

As she probably could not get a train in the morning early enough to bring her before breakfast, I planned for Rosy, who was taking Mary's place for a week, to get the breakfast. About six o'clock the next morning, Rosy came running to the nursery, and waked me and the children, crying that Tibbie was in the kitchen making the fire.

I ran down in my wrapper, and there was Tibbie stepping briskly about the kitchen, and singing her favorite song, "Roy's wife of Aldivalloch."

"Where in the world were you, Tibbie, last night?" I asked.

"Weel," said Tibbie, "as I got oot o' the horse-car in New York, I slippet, an' hangin' on to the car to

straighten mesel', I wrenched me wrist, me left wrist. I almost fainted wi' the pain ; an' a gentleman an' a policeman helpet me into a chemist's, where the young man done me up. An' then I had to remain till the pain was over ; so when I got to the depot, the last train was left, an' so I jus' walket oot."

"Walked out six miles ! not alone, Tibbie, at eleven o'clock at night?"

"Why not?" said Tibbie. "I've nae fear o' ghosts nor goblins, nor the Evil One himsel', and there wad no' be likely to be folk a-walkin' about for pleasure on a railroad track at that time o' night. There are them," added Tibbie, pointedly, "whas' souls are filled wi' superstition, like them that bows to stocks and stones. There's Wully Mann at home ; he told me that in the kirkyard, by the auld kirk, he'd seen spirits a-goin' 'blunk, blunk,' on the graves o' unbaptized infants. 'An' what' for?' says I. 'That's what I dinna ken,' says he ; 'but I gaes twa miles oot o' my way to avoid them.' 'Puir silly lad,' says I ; 'it's the Will o' the Wisp an' nae spirits that costs ye that lang road an' wears oot ye'r bittes or ye'r ain hide.'

"Ay, ay," said Tibbie, making ready to peel the potatoes ; "it will be a braw time when we can be set free frae the frailties and follies o' th' flesh."

“But, Tibbie, where did you stay last night?”

“Weel, I didna wish to arouse ye; an’ sae I went to Mistress Kennedy’s an’ routed them up, an’ I cam here before light an’ got in the coal-house window. I knew if I wasna here to lock up that Rosy wud leave some place open. She ’d locked the front door secure I kenn’d weel. She’s aye thinkin’ o’ the front o’ everything; her gown is braver nor her underclaes, an’ her front hair maun be crimpet, though the back is rough as a Sheltie’s mane.”

“It is verra strange,” she said to me, after one of her trips to the city, “how the Scotch speech clings to a body. Just as I was gettin’ oot a horse-car in ‘Sixt’ Aveny,’ the conductor says to me, ‘Hoo’s Glasky?’ I turned round upon him an’ he winket an’ says, ‘Will ye lat me down noo,’ a-mockin’ me. Weel, my betters has been mocked before me, frae Elijah to the Covenanters.”

There was an old man about town whom Tibbie especially detested, as she considered him lazy. At one time an old lounge had been taken to the barn and set down at one end of it by the back door, which was usually open, till it could be disposed of.

On the lounge, in the cool corner, Tibbie one day found poor Timothy Hughes taking a nap, his empty

lunch-pail by his side. She shut the door near him, and locked it on the outside. He awoke as she did so, and called, "Tibbie, don't ye lock the door, I'm in the barran ;" but she walked straight into the house. After an hour or so, she went out on the pretence of getting kindling, unlocked the door, and went unconcernedly in. Timothy was all worn out with pounding on the door, and hoarse with calling. "Why did n't ye let me out, Tibbie?" said he ; "I've nigh about screeched me lungs out."

"Well, it won't hurt 'em," said Tibbie ; "they'd been having a fine rest. I thought as ye were sleepin' sae weel, it was a sin to disturb ye."

"Had n't I the lawn to mow before the master gets back?" cried Timothy.

"Oh, had ye? Weel, if I'd 'a' known that, I'd have waked ye ; but I thought ye must 'a' hired somebody to mow for ye. Mowin' was ne'er done by sluggards."

"I've took a nap every day at me mowin' and never wasted me time before," said Timothy.

"Have ye? Weel, then, I hold mesel' quite responsible for it by setting the lounge out here as a temptation, so fly round an' work lively an' mak' up for lost time. Ye must be weel revived noo."

The next night at dusk, I saw a friend of Tibbie's,

a stout young blacksmith, helping Tibbie to drag the lounge back into the store-room.

"What is that for, Tibbie?" said I. "Is n't that the broken lounge?"

"Weel, in *my* een it was but a broken lounge; but it proved a temptation and the snare of the fowler in Timothy Hughes's een, so I've withdrawn it from him."

Poor Timothy the next day looked in vain for his soft corner. He then sat on a box in the barn and leaned his head on the boards; but that was too hard a pillow, and he returned to the mowing, much to Tibbie's satisfaction.

One night Tibbie went into the next town, and on her return told me that she had been much impressed by what she had heard. On one side of the street was a large lager beer and drinking saloon, — a place where "billiards and gambling cards war played," and where rough young men from the city gathered in the evening. This place was brilliantly lighted this Summer evening; all she could hear as she passed was the clicking of balls. Suddenly from this saloon a woman's voice broke the stillness, rising in song. The first words Tibbie lost, but the chorus rang out clearly, —

"Tears and poverty ebb and flow,
Tears and poverty ebb and flow."

“And,” said Tibbie, “across the street was the lighted chapel, an’ I heard the voices of the children practising for the concert, singing like the angels, ‘Hallelujah, hallelujah, glory to God in the highest!’ What think ye o’ that, Mistress Burroughs?” asked Tibbie; “I felt as if I was walkin’ a strait and narrow way betwixt the two eternal states o’ bein’.”

Once Tibbie went to Coney Island with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy.

“I had quite an encounter,” she said, on her return, “wi’ a fortin-teller. She had builded hersel’ a bit house upon the shiftin’ sand, like the foolish man in the Scripeter, wi’ one winder in the front to relieve hersel’ o’ her sin an’ folly through. Weel, as we passet by, she hailed me an’ asket me wad I hae me fortin told. Sae thinkin’ the time had come for me to deliver me testimony, I just halted in the front o’ her, an’ says I, ‘What gied ye the power to be searchin’ into the deep things o’ God? Weel do I ken that it is naught but a leein’ abomination that ye practise. We are forbid in the word o’ God frae consortin’ wi’ fortin-tellers or soothsayers or conjurers or them that, like the father o’ lees, mak’s and practizes them. Do ye call to mind what the Apostle said to Simon, “Ye’r money perish wi’ ye”? Are ye the witch o’ Endor that

ye wad produce Samuel to our admiring een? Mair like, ye 'd marshal oot the De'il an' his angels.' By this time," said Tibbie, "there was quite a collection of folk; and the daughter o' Heth slappet down her winder, an' Mrs. Kennedy she drawed me awa'."

VII.

SCOTT is one of our family. He is a Scottish American, born in New York State, of Scottish parents. Handsome, polite, faithful to his friends, civil to strangers, the most sensitive soul alive to praise or blame is Scott, our collie-dog. So perfect are his manners, so delicate his sense of the fitness of things, that when occasionally he does some doglike act, we are quite shocked. He is perfectly obedient even to little Elinor. He has his likes and dislikes, as do others, but his loving heart will not let him carry out his own wishes against the wishes of another.

The strangest thing is that Scott never had any training such as dogs are supposed to need. The friend who gave him to us told me that from a baby—I cannot say a pup—he had been different from other dogs about the place. When Scott was brought from his birthplace and sent to the stables in his new home, a fierce bull-terrier that had brought all the other dogs into subjection flew at him, counting on easy game in the gentle collie. But he had mistaken his

opponent. As he dashed at the new-comer, showing his gleaming teeth and bristling like a little fiend, Scott, with a leap, went over his head, seized him by the tail, and whirled him around till he was glad to slink away. Every day for nearly three weeks this game was played, the collie always coming out best; and after that the bull-terrier would run when he saw Scott coming, though he never offered to give fight, but was inclined to be friendly. And indeed, before long they became good comrades and play-fellows.

I told the children what Scott's master had said,—that he was obedient because he was loving, and was wise too in making a friend from an enemy.

“Oh,” cried Douglas, in a burst of enthusiasm, “is n't he good,—better than I am? Scott won't have to change much to get ready for heaven!”

Then Scott is a good nurse. No one could injure the children if Scott were present. He doesn't like to have a stranger lift Elinor. He gets up from his corner to say “oof;” and if that mild remark is disregarded he steps up and gives a quick bark. He is also a watchman. He sleeps in the nursery, but the whole house is open to him; and if he hears an unusual sound he goes downstairs and walks about and gives a few gruff barks.

As we go from room to room in the daytime, Scott

always follows. He plays ball and bean-bags with Elinor. He lies on the sofa while she puts a sweeping-cap on him, a pillow under his head, and a rug over him, and unresisting, he plays Red Riding Hood's Grandmother. He is often sleeping in the nursery corner with a "Tam o' Shanter" on his head, or an old bonnet, or with ribbons for bracelets on his paws. At the first sound of little voices in the morning, he rouses himself, and goes to the children, lays his lovely head by them, licks their hands, and then goes back to his favorite corner, and "flops" down for another nap. He can play too; he can leap over piles of chairs and towel-racks. From where he stands he rises like a bird on the wing, and fairly floats through the air; it is a pretty sight. Douglas shows him off to the school-children as they go to and from school, and is proud of his beautiful friend, as he flies over the fence at his command.

We have had dogs who insisted on being fed at the table, and who would go about and "tap" our arms to draw our attention. Never so does Scott. He generally lies under a sofa or a table; but if he is very hungry, he goes and sits by some one without a sign or sound, — he just sits and looks. But Douglas cannot go on eating if Scott has chosen him; he cannot bear that earnest entreating gaze. Truly it is the gaze

of the "Ancient Mariner:" after he has set his eye on one he never takes it off till his hunger is satisfied. Douglas sometimes puts up his hand to his face to shut Scott from his vision; but after a moment Scott slips round to the other side, and still gazes.

One day Douglas was very much depressed with this unwearied vigilance, and he put his handkerchief before his eyes. That was awkward, and in a moment little Elinor, touched by her brother's low spirits, slipped out of her chair, and came and stood between him and the eager eyes of Scott, holding her large napkin up like a screen between the dog and his little master while Douglas went cheerfully on with his dinner.

One night the nurse was away, and after the children were in bed I went out for the evening, leaving Tibbie sitting in the upper hall, to read by the light there till the little children were asleep. Then she was to return to her work downstairs, leaving her kitchen door open, and Scott for nurse in the upper hall. At last the little folk were asleep, and Tibbie started to go downstairs.

"Oof!" said Scott, starting up from his nap; "bow wow wow!"

Fearing that he would wake the children, she went back and patted him, and sat down for a moment

more. Then she tried again to go down; but he barked again and louder and louder, as she went on toward the kitchen. She tried several times in the evening to go down, but he would not let her. I suppose the unusual silence of the house oppressed him; or more likely he thought I had left her in charge, and determined that she should not play me false.

Not a harsh word will Scott allow between the children. If he is sleeping in a distant room, at the faintest sound of an unloving voice he is on the spot. "Oof, oof!" says the peacemaker. The children accept his reproof. "Oof, oof!" says Scott. "Hear Scott, he says 'be loving,'" says little Elinor, and Douglas apologizes to him, —

"Scott, I was n't quarrelling with her. I only wanted that book a minute, and she would n't let me have it."

And then Scott lies down near by with his eye on his little charges.

I can scarcely separate the children and Scott and this dear old house in my thoughts. I remember one day when Douglas with Scott at his heels came to the parlor window, flattening his small nose there, and making a little blur of breath on the pane and stretching his gray eyes to see if I was in the room. He

had news of exceeding interest to tell me. He had just lost a tooth ; it got caught in the hammock twine when he was swinging, and came out. He opened his mouth to show me a row of white baby teeth, with a little blank space, and two "big boy's teeth" halfway through. Dear Douglas ! he was in the chrysalis state then, — his long fair hair had just been cut off, but his kilts remained to show that he had been little.

Soon the kilts had to be discarded. He became such an expert climber that he went through the apple-trees like a squirrel ; but unlike a squirrel he was obliged to "shin up" the trunks. The kilts were merely fringes of rags. The first knee-breeches were bought "just to climb in ;" but that was the end of kilts. "Give me knee-breeches or give me death," cried the soul of the "big boy" within him.

I remember a day too, when I stood at the window watching the children in the garden.

"Mother," cried Douglas, seeing me, "I *dag* the garden ready for your seeds." Douglas is very critical in the use of English, — no irregular verbs for Douglas !

Little Elinor was working away with a toy hoe with great energy. What manner of seed she was planning for I know not, unless it was a cocoa-nut or a whole watermelon, for the hole was a foot deep at

least. Then, tired, she sat on a box to rest, ordering her friend Scott, who had been playing overseer, to finish her work. He at once obeyed her, digging with his fore-legs, and kicking showers of dirt out between his hind-legs. He worked with enthusiasm, his imagination fired by little Elinor's occasional, "Sic 'em, Scott."

The little picture from the study window I shall never forget, — the grass in the foreground, and the berry-bushes in the background, and the sky over all, and the little figures which make its beauty; all are mine.

One day I watched the children play store with green apples under a tree, Douglas in a gray flannel suit, a red necktie, and a yellow-and-black toboggan cap. Nothing short of ninety degrees in the shade could displace that beloved cap. The tassel on the end stuck out; one was reminded of Mr. Pickwick's night-cap.

Elinor shopped in a blue gingham apron which came to her ankles. She looked like the Maid in the Moon, with her round face, — her dear face full of kissing places.

She drew one doll in a baby carriage, and held a drooping rag infant over her shoulder. In one hand she carried a basket. She wore an anxious expression,

weighed down, poor lady, with a housekeeper's cares and a mother's duties.

Then they journeyed to the city in a wheelbarrow, and then marched to war with a flag and trumpet. As it is the drama of life which they are playing day by day, each scene must needs be soon over, for at the shortest it is a drama with many scenes. Scott follows for a private, — Scott, wonderful creation, comrade, careful nursery-maid, sympathizing friend, wise policeman; all at the tender age of two and a half.

Away race this trio still, day by day over lawn and path, and at night sleep in one room, — Scott at the head of his little master's bed. Dear Douglas, dear Elinor! but, ah, me! I must think too of the other little child, whose dear face I seem always to see between them, — the little brother of whom they whisper in their prayers, and whose presence abides with me through sad days and through merry days — and always will.

One day several little girls on their way home from school stopped to admire Douglas's new wagon. He wished to show off before the ladies, and galloped up and down the path at a terrible rate, Scott barking a remonstrance at his heels, till at last he tripped and fell, and the wagon ran over him. His poor little

hands were scratched with gravel, and he howled with pain. The little girls took to their heels and fled, and the young gentleman was borne into the house in the arms of a maid.

Little Elinor flew to him with outstretched hands. "Here 's love !" she cried, and hugged him as he struggled. Poor Douglas always resented being hurt, and felt as if the earth and the inhabitants thereof had conspired to injure him.

"Oh, mother," he wept as he looked at the poor scraped little palms, "help me into bed."

"I 'll undress you," said Elinor, proceeding to put away his clothes as I took them off.

After he was bound up and comforted, she took her little rocking-chair to his bed and began to read from a copy of Robert Browning upside down. (Dear Elinor ! sometimes I think when really reading Browning that the book must be upside down.) She composed as she read, —

"A child who lay in slumbers deep,
Her soldier toys stood close by her ;
And very close they stood to her, —
Her little crib a-dotting round,
To guard it as the angels do."

"Pho !" said Douglas, fretfully, "that 's poetry."

"Well," said the cheerful little nurse, "never mind

if it is ; it's going to end in the story of a big, big man who ate folks, and then got eaten up himself. Do you ache now, Douglas, you poor little boy?"

"Yes, awfully," said Douglas. "I tell you I was frightened when I fell under that wagon."

"I guess you frightened somebody else," said Mary Shannon ; "for the butcher's boy drew his horse right up and stopped till I'd carried you in."

"Well, he ought to have got out and comforted Douglas ; he's a mean, mean boy," said little Elinor ; "I sha'n't look at his wagon the next time he goes by. I shall say, 'Sic 'em, Scott ;'" and being thus adjured, Scott said "oof."

Did you ever think that dogs are types of different classes of men? It is not so with horses. Horses are gentle or wilful, strong or weak, dilapidated and forlorn, or fine and spirited animals. A horse is never low ; dogs sometimes are, for dogs are more human than horses. You remember Bill Sykes's dog. I've seen plenty like him, — dogs that look like the loungers about grogeries, poker-players, prize-fighters, as if they swore, and always barked in slang ; low-lived dogs, snub-nosed, thick-necked, bow-legged. Then there are dogs like common dull ordinary folk, and little sharp homeless curs that have to look out for themselves, and count with bootblacks and newsboys.

Scott is a thorough gentleman, a friend, a companion, entirely one of us, human. He, like Mary Ellen, does not speak English, merely as a matter of choice. He prefers to speak through an interpreter, — one or another of the family. He gave, through one of his interpreters, a receipt the other day for a collie: unmeasured love and faithfulness, and a merry heart, with a fur cover soft as silk; and what is this but a fur angel?

We had never owned a collie before Scott came. Newfoundland dogs and tan terriers and setters had been our canine companions. With all our petting, we could never get at the heart of a Newfoundland dog. We brought up three from puppies; but after they had stayed with us and chewed up our rubbers and regularly torn the morning paper, and devoured our substance with their enormous appetites, they — the three, one at a time — went deliberately away and settled with other families. One, black Ned, chose an old German who worked on the railroad; and though the old man honestly brought him back, he would not stay, and so after having paid for his return three times, we formally presented him to the old man, and one day Allan saw the two sitting lovingly side by side by the track at noon eating out of one dinner-pail, turn about, and old Ned quoted doubtless, as Allan passed, —

“ If he be not fair for me,
What care I how fair he be ? ”

I could n't love a terrier. I like a dog with soft fur, not a little shivering creature in tights. Then as for setters, they must run ; running is a setter's life. Our old Don would follow on a drive of fifteen miles each way, doubling the distance with his dashes and raids, and would then want to wrestle with a neighbor's dog on his return, and be ready and alert for a long walk in the evening.

But Scott, dear Scott (he has a secret he will not divulge, — whether he is called a Scot, or is named for Sir Walter ; we choose to spell it Scott), — Scott, true to his ancestry, is a watcher, one who stays by to look after things. He has children and a house to guard, instead of sheep upon the heathery hills, and here he stays, with only runs and frolics with his children in the garden ; and though he sleep, 't is always with an anxious heart and listening ear.

Sometimes when the children are going to bed, I tell a story for Scott, who sits by with pricked-up ears and fixed attention, as he hears his name often introduced.

“ ‘ I often remember,’ says Scott ” (say I), “ ‘ seeing my dear collie-mother as she sat by the glowing fire at twilight, telling us fine tales of the hills of Scotland

where she and my father watched sheep. When a deep snow fell and the little lambs got covered in it, we used to run around and scent them ; and then we would dig a little hole at the spot where we traced one, and run over and dig another hole, the shepherd following us and digging down and getting the lam-mies out, while we found out the places for him to dig.’ ”

“ That was very kind in your mother, Scotty dear,” says Elinor, stopping half undressed to hug her friend ; “ if I got under the snow, would you dig me out ? ” Scott licks the little hand that pats him. “ He says he would,” says Elinor.

If there is occasion to bark, Scott can bark. Sometimes a passing “ glass-put-in man ” shakes his fist at him, as he sits on the piazza, and he is obliged to resent the insult. Sometimes a dog runs by, and Scott feels sure that he is the wrong dog, and he tells him so. It is seldom, in fact, that the right dog does go by. It seems to him like having a dog forced on his acquaintance to see one whom he has never seen before go boldly by in *his* street, or on *his* sidewalk.

One day as I was sitting reading in the parlor, my ear was caught by an odd sound, and looking toward the window I saw there a little dog, — a clumsy tan terrier with his ears cropped off entirely. He was

tapping on the pane with his paw ; he wanted to come in.

Tibbie took a stick and drove him away. She said he looked as if his name was "Mickey." In about an hour he was again begging to come in. The barn was open. The dog could have gone there for warmth in the hay ; but no, he tapped at the parlor window and whined. When Scott went into the yard, he took no notice of the little dog, that jumped on him and seemed overjoyed to see him ; but he bore his attentions with patience. When the door opened to let Scott in, the little dog wailed aloud at being left outside. At last we captured him and locked him in the barn.

The next morning he was tapping on the panes. "He says, 'Scott's inside ; why can't I come in?'" interpreted little Elinor.

Scott was always incensed at dogs who trespassed on our grounds,—*that* he would not allow ; but he seemed to accept this little chap. As he lay sunning himself on the piazza, the little dog sat at the gate and notified him of passers-by by barking when they reached the gate. Scott would give a lazy "oof" from the piazza. The pedlers he let go with this mild rebuke, and the rag-picker with his hook and basket got no worse. "Bark on, small dog," he seemed to say ;

“earn your board by vigilance, and save my time.” It was evident that Scott had determined to keep a dog himself. He had always been on the alert for a noise ; but now in the parlor he lay and snored in ease of mind, for he kept a dog outside that would bark “to arms” if necessary. Days passed away, but the little dog stayed on. He was now called Scott’s dog.

One morning as the children were playing on the sidewalk with Scott and his dog, they saw a little old Irishman jogging along on a dirt-cart. As he neared them, he drew up his horse and exclaimed joyfully, —

“Why, Nigger, is that you, me boy? I thought I’d lost ye.”

“Is that little dog yours?” cried Douglas. “He just came here and would live at our house. We’ve fed him for most a week.”

“Thank ye,” said the little old man, getting down from his seat to take the dog, who was making frantic efforts to get into the cart ; “thank the little gentleman, Nigger ; bow yer head, sir.” And being further admonished by a tap on his head, the little dog without ears rose on his thin hind-legs, dropped his paws, and nodded his thanks and a good-by all in one. And then, being lifted into the dirt-cart, he rode off, sitting on the seat beside the old man, whose arm

was around him. Scott barked furiously, and dashed after the man who was stealing his dog, and after the traitor who was deserting him. Then he came back, and he and the children stood and gazed down the road till the new friend was lost to sight round a corner.

I think that children are the most entertaining of companions ; the most interesting, the most marvellous of comrades. I relate, I explain, — and, behold ! I discover some day that the things I told had quite another meaning to them from the one I intended. Dear little well-balanced, blank minds ! — how funny they are, in their lack of experience of even the commonest things !

I suppose God looks on our bewildered, untrained, finite minds as we look on the children's, and He tries to explain to us out of the wonders of His omniscience, by the Bible and by His works, but we cannot grasp His thought. The strangest thing we do, the most ignorant and foolish, is to limit His love, when by word and work He tells us that it is limitless. The time will come, in the new life, when we shall smile and wonder at the childish narrow views we took in this world, even as little Elinor does now at the silly things she did when she was "little." How wonder-

ful it all will be when we know even as we are known ! To God's knowledge we must seem as perverse as our baby seemed to me when I showed her the letters on her blocks.

"Baby," said I, in perfect assurance of my knowledge, "that is *S*."

"It is not," she asserted.

"And this is *T*."

"It is not."

Still, though I said, "Mamma knows best," and went on to different letters, "It is not," was her only answer.

One day I was looking at an atlas, and Elinor pressed close to me to look too.

"What is it?" she asked.

I pointed out a crinkled black line on the page. "That is the Mississippi River ; I was looking for a town on the river," I answered.

Elinor looked at me with surprised eyes. "That is not a river," she said ; "it is a pencil-mark. A river is made of water ; Douglas said so !"

"Yes, a river is water ; but this is a sort of picture of a river."

"It is not," said Elinor ; "there's a picture of a river in the parlor, with pictures of the boats on it."

I gave it up and changed the subject.

One night, after Elinor had said "Amen" to her prayer, she stopped and said, "Nobody can see 'Amen.'"

"When you read," I said, "you can see 'Amen' in a book."

"Yes," she insisted, "but you can't ever, anywhere, *see* an 'Amen.'"

"Oh, you mean that it is like 'good-morning' or 'good-night,' or 'how-do-you-do'?"

"Yes," she said; "I can see you and see Douglas and see Scott and the pin-cushion, but I can't see 'Amen.'"

She had discovered nouns.

And Douglas added, "It is n't good English either, to say 'Amen'; it ought to be *A man*."

Alas, had I not explained the very night before that "Amen" meant, "so be it," or "let it be so," or "let me have an answer to what I have asked"?

I came across a bundle of old letters lately which I had written to my brother Dick. They were family letters, full of the children's every-day doings and sayings. I was much struck with the confused state of the little minds, with their rag-bag knowledge, real and fancied treasures, — a strange medley waiting to be arranged and classified, distributed, I hope, as Mr. Lowell's delightful knowledge seems to be, in pigeon-

holes and drawers of his mind, ready for instant use.

One day when I was going to Philadelphia with Douglas, a long lank boy in outgrown clothes and with his hair hanging in elf-locks came through the cars selling candy. "Hullo!" said Douglas to the boy, "I know you. You are Barnaby Rudge. How's your crow?" The boy stared at him and passed on. I asked Douglas what he meant, and I discovered that the poor little soul had thought that all the characters with which he was familiar in our illustrated Dickens were photographed from life and were likely to be encountered at any time.

When little Elinor was given a doll's trunk she gazed at it with joy, then with a sudden cloud upon her face she ran to me and said, "Mamma, do you think that rough fellow who stole little David Copperfield's trunk in the picture, and cried 'Pollis! pollis!' will steal my little trunk too?" and, behold! little Elinor had shared her brother's belief.

Douglas had heard with much interest of the Dinornis and Epiornis. But he could hardly keep back the tears of disappointment when he beheld the skeletons in the Natural History Rooms. "Surely, you call a bird with such stout legs — a bird that could carry a man — a large bird?" said I.

"Mother," said the small boy of great expectations, "I thought from what you read that they were as high as the barn."

But the whale's teeth went beyond anything he had ever dreamed of in the way of teeth. He wished very much to know the market price of such teeth. I could n't tell him.

"But," he persisted, "are we rich enough to buy a few whale's teeth?"

"Yes, I am quite sure that we are," I said.

I overheard him boast to a little boy over the fence a few days afterward of our affluence in being able to indulge in whale's teeth.

At the circus the gigantic Jumbo did not surprise him. "When are the large elephants coming in?" asked he. It was the same with the ten-horse Roman chariot; oh, no, he had thought, he said, that it was to be like the big picture in our parlor, where the chariot dashed through the sky. Guido's Aurora! Poor Mr. Barnum did n't dream of such a rival!

The mandrill monkey did impress him. He said he thought Mr. Darwin had n't a better monkey in his collection than that. And behold, he had looked on the illustrations in one of Darwin's books as on a circus advertisement, and on Mr. Darwin as a collector of monkeys.

But the one thing at the circus that perfectly suited him was the clown. This new sort of person burst upon him in all his gay striped glory, a vision of untold rapture. Oh, the clown, the clown ! the leaps he could take, the faces he could make ! *He* meant to be a clown as soon as he grew up ; yes, the day he was twenty-one. He cut paper clowns, he painted clowns, he bought a clown mask.

At times in Douglas's short life he made for himself various standards of wisdom. His own knowledge was the standard, as with older and wiser folk. At this time an infallible sign to him of the utter and hopeless ignorance of any one he met, was the use of "ain't."

The next Spring his uncle took him for a birthday treat to the circus.

"Dear, dear !" said we, "now we'll hear of nothing for weeks but the clown, the clown, and of all the brilliant remarks he may make."

But not so. Douglas rushed into the house at night, horror and disappointment on his face.

"Mother," he cried, "what *do* you suppose the clown said?"

I had to confess that imagination failed me.

"Why, mother," exclaimed the disappointed little boy, "the clown, the *clown* said *ain't*."

His idol was shattered !

When I read "Tom Brown's School-days" to him I did n't dare to read the "ain'ts" which the boys used constantly in their talk, fearing that Rugby would sink so low in his estimation as a temple of learning that it never could be raised again.

It takes a long time to learn not to express decided opinions on matters one knows nothing about. I had a very decided opinion that no child should be taught to read till he was seven or eight years old, and that then he could learn readily in a few months. I felt angry at the very idea of beating such a thing as reading and spelling into baby brains; but I've taught a child now, and changed my mind.

My boy was more than seven years old when I undertook to introduce him to the "word-system." I knew that was the best system. In order to give the system a fair trial, he really ought not to have known his letters, but somehow he had picked them up. I made the statement to begin with, that the printed word "boy" (pointing to it) was a word that meant "boy."

"You know, Douglas," said I, "that people make sounds in telling about things. You call those sounds 'talking.' Those sounds are words. When I say, 'Look out of the window and see that boy—'"

Douglas looked out of the window eagerly. "There is n't any boy," he said.

"No ; but you see when I said those words you knew what I meant. You looked out to see a boy. You did n't think I meant the big locust-tree when I said 'boy.' So this word in the book is a sign for the word 'boy' [I remembered by this time that it was a *sign* of a word]. When I look on this book, that word there [pointing] means 'boy' to my eyes, just as the sound when I speak it means 'boy' to your ears. Do you understand what I mean?"

"No," said Douglas ; "because those letters you are pointing to are n't a word ; they 're only just letters *b* and *o* and *y*."

"But words are made of letters, my dear," said I.

"Mamma, b-o-y, does n't sound like 'boy.'"

"But listen to the sound of the letters in 'boy,'" said I, trying to give the letters the sounds they really have in the word.

"That 's right, that sounds it," said Douglas ; "but *b* and *o* and *y* does n't sound it, mamma."

There was nothing before me but to begin at the foundation of the English language. "This thing *C* is a sign, and it has a name, 'C,' and it has a sound — no, alas ! it has two sounds. It has one sound like *k*, when you say 'cat ;' and it has another sound, — a

hissing sound made between your teeth, as when you say 'cent.' "

G was a desperate letter ; it was soft when Douglas was looking for a hard *G*, and it was hard and solid when he was looking for a soft *G*. And why was *W* not called "double *V*" when it really was two *V*s, and what was the use of having an *S* at all when soft *C* would do as well, asked the poor little boy. Then the *ths*, and the *shs*, and *whs*, and *oughs* and *K* silent before *N* ! Dear, dear ! I found I was not only introducing my son but myself also, to the English language.

A seemed a perfect fiend incarnate. In the Primer this little column set forth its claims to the title : —

Ape,
Apple,
Art.

At last Douglas began to read. "See the cat. Hear the dog. See the white hen. See the bag of corn." He stumbled along through a few pages, expecting doubtless day by day to come upon some fine tale ; but when we turned a page and began, — "I see a man, a hoe and a rake, and a dog and a shed. Ann has a bird, and Dan has a gun," — Douglas looked at me with tears gathering in his gray eyes.

"Mamma," said he, reproachfully, "I don't care

to read such baby stuff, like little fellows that wear kilts and have n't had a horse-clipper on their heads, or owned a foot-ball, or been to a circus three times."

Sure enough, poor fellow, why should he want to read it? Why had I, stupid mother, forced such pap on a boy of seven and a half years, who had been fed freely on the Bible, the "Pilgrim's Progress," Dickens's and Hawthorne's stories, Andersen's fairy stories and "Robinson Crusoe," — not to mention English and Scotch ballads by the dozen? I sighed for very gratitude to my mother. I never could remember learning to read.

After that, I let him read the *tos* and *its* and *ofs*, and just told him outright the hard words (did n't some great English teacher teach Latin after that fashion?). Poor soul! he always called *was* "saw," and *saw* "was," — which somewhat startled me; I thought he might be going to read backward for a last variety.

I sought then for a little American History for a reading-book and found one in words of one syllable. But what words! They cramped the meaning and forced poor English upon us, — awkward, ill-turned sentences. Such books ought to be written in easy words which children are used to, the syllables sepa-

rated and dealt out, one syllable at a time, to small brains.

But the little History interested the child. Even Elinor stopped in her play to hear about "Christopher Columbia," — as she called him, — and Bunker Hill. The events followed each other in such rapid succession in the little book that she probably thought that Christopher Columbus fought and died on Bunker Hill.

I was reading parts of "Marmion" to Douglas. He was delighted with it. When the original Douglas, learning of the forgery of a friend's name by Marmion, cries out in gratitude to Heaven that his sons can neither read nor write, my little Douglas shouted, "Oh, mamma ! you see everybody does n't care about the children learning ; I wish you did n't."

Douglas took kindly to geography. I introduced it to him in this wise. I bought a thirty-cent paper-covered atlas, and slipping out the leaves, I let him repaint the faintly-tinted maps and retrace the rivers and mountains ; and by this agreeable method he learned a good deal about geography. He would call Siberia "Exile," and Wales "Quails," and Turkey — oh, he made very merry over Turkey, as if it had been named Rooster. Afterward I found some outline maps, over which he had to exercise his brain a

little in placing the rivers and mountains as best he could by looking at a finished map. We have now a fine map of England marked with the counties, and of this we have made together quite a careful study. I have read Dickens's "Child's History of England" three times through to Douglas; and we carefully looked up the places mentioned, on our map. He can name all the counties and point them out.

Every story that we read, many pictures that we see, seem to people island or shore for him. He sees the galleys of the Romans seeking tin and lead in Cornwall, and the Pilgrims leaving their home in Devon. I dare say the Roman galleys and the "May-flower" run dangerously near to collision in his little brain; for what are dates to him? He "locates" on his map Victor Hugo's island, views of which he has seen in a magazine, and the island where Tennyson (who owns Excalibur) has his Summer home; he can find the town where John Bunyan lived, and he almost expects to see Mr. Peggotty sitting on Yarmouth, and Shakespeare on Stratford-on-Avon. He knows Robin Hood's county and that of the wicked sheriff.

My way of teaching geography is a slower but a surer way than by memorizing the names of places. Douglas has been through a simple account of Paul's journeys with me, using an ancient atlas; it entertained

him wonderfully. He will not be left, if I can help it, in the bewildering maze in which was the little boy who asked one of my friends in Sunday-school, "Where are these places you are talking about? They are not on the map in our Geography. Are they in heaven?"

I am glad that Douglas got hold of a little English history before he began on America. He is delighted to find reasons in his knowledge of English places and events for the naming of the States and many towns by the early settlers. He sees the reason, too, why, when Columbus was seeking India and thought he had found it, he named the American natives Indians.

One day I happened to see a set of gay-colored embossed pictures in a stationer's window, the kings and queens of England at two cents a sovereign, — as low a price as could well be asked for kings and queens. Each sovereign was decked in the proper costume, and each, from William the Norman down to Victoria, bore a little tag with the appropriate name, the date of birth, death, and coronation, and the principal events of the reign. We found pictures too of Boadicea dashing about in her chariot, of Alfred harping in the Danes' camp, of Canute sitting in a chair by the wild sea waves, of John signing Magna Charta, of the great London fire, and of the Spanish Armada. Then we bought a scrap-book, and Douglas

and I began our illustrated English History. We have found many other interesting pictures at different stationers' or toyshops, and we have (always in the embossed pictures) many of Shakespeare's characters. The historical pictures we place on fly-leaves by the kings they belong to, the others on fly-leaves by Elizabeth's page.

We have also on fly-leaves the soldiers of England, from the Normans down to the present queen, each in his proper day and generation, and in his proper uniform, if one may speak of a coat of mail as a uniform. We have heads of the great English inventors surrounded by little pictures of their inventions, and Nelson and Wellington after the same fashion surrounded by battles, medals, and monuments, and each is placed in our book according to his date. Our last purchase was a picture of the Tower of London, and of the queen's various castles. What delightful pegs these kings and queens are to hang history on !

This book is brought out at each history lesson, — this dear and gorgeous book. Little Elinor looks at it with admiration ; she showed it to a guest one day. " This is King John," she said ; " he was a very weak king. Douglas says," adding by way of explanation, " he could hardly walk." " This one is Mary Bloody," she went on. " These are the little Princes in the

Tower ; and that is Hubert, a kind man who tried to save them, but he could n't."

Elinor sat playing with her dolls one day, while Douglas was learning his history lesson. It was about Joan of Arc, and told how the "wicked earl sent to have her dragged off to the stake." Elinor burst into the lesson, asking, "Why did Joan of Arc let those bad men take her off? Why did n't she go in a closet when they called on her, and shut the door tight and stay there till the men had gone, and then send for her father to let her out?"

I explained that she could n't help being taken away, that they dragged her ; but Elinor was still sure that she was a "foolish girl," and that if, with sufficient foresight, she had stepped into the closet so that the people would think she had gone out when the men who inquired for her rang for her at the door, they would have been defeated in their evil plans. Well, let it be so ; even grown people can't always see from others' standpoints, but only from their own little ant-hills.

One day I was reading to Douglas about the Apostle Paul, and of his being beaten with stripes. "Well, Paul ought to be beated," cried Elinor, bursting fiercely in, holding her beloved "Shut Eye" by the leg ; "for I saw Paul get little Peter Smidt's bat

away and pound little Yacob with it. I thumped on the pane, but he wouldn't mind."

There was only one Paul for Elinor. The great apostle to the Gentiles was no other to her than little Dutch Paul in long trousers and suspenders, from the tenement-house in the back field, fighting with his little brother Yacob. What but years will settle a small boy's brain, who after reading "The Wonder Book" calls Pegasus *Peggotty*, and who with fresh visions of Christiana and Mercy before him plays croquet with "wicket gates"?

I did n't dream of taking up English grammar with Douglas until I came across a delightful little book, "Grammar-Land;" then I tried it on Douglas's mind and it fitted very well. Little Elinor draws up her chair when the scarlet covers are opened, and asks for a peep at the rich funny Mr. Noun and little poor, poor Article. The parts of speech are personified and called up before Judge Grammar in court to get settled for good, and the whole plan is so cleverly worked out that a child can never forget the clear definitions nor help enjoying the fun.

"It is sad," says Elinor, "that little Article has only two words for his own, an 'a' and a 'the.'"

"And was n't Article funny," says Douglas, "to say 'an' meant the same as 'a,'—it was only 'a'

with his overcoat on ! and it's true that he always does run before Mr. Noun, — *the* dog, *an* apple, *the* cat."

Mr. Adjective, who squeezes in between little Article and Mr. Noun to tell everybody if Mr. Noun's words are good or bad words, is another friend. Oh, it all passes for a merry tale ! but it is a sugared pill, and the virtue is left to work.

Then we attacked arithmetic. Douglas easily mastered the four tables, and went on to the tables of English and American money, of common weights and measures. Of course we go over and over the tables, and the little sly examples that follow them.

One day I began, "If one banana costs seven cents, how much —"

"Seven cents for one banana," cried Douglas, "who'd give that? At Mr. Wist's you only pay three cents apiece, and at the market you can get two for five cents ; what a skin !"

At last we rise above our surprise at the extortioner's price and go on to "English money."

"Twenty-one shillings make a guinea," says Douglas.

"I've seen live guinea-hens and guinea-pigs," says little Elinor.

"Oh, Elinor, these guineas are money," explains Douglas, in a large way.

Elinor laughs. "Oh, I did n't know there was any guinea-pig money before."

One morning I opened at the table for measuring horses. "Oh, let me learn that!" cried Douglas; "and is there a table for measuring cows; and how about hens?"

If there were only a kindergarten near by, I know of two little pupils for it.

My children, in common with all others, have a great fondness for pictures; and I have taken pains that they should have plenty of good ones to see. Douglas now can distinguish in the magazines quite as quickly as I can the drawings of the different artists; and he criticises them. "Mamma, this girl doesn't look at the book in her hand; she is looking over the edge of it;" or, "I think that child's head is too big for his body;" or, "Oh, is n't that a nice picture? Those boys look just as merry as they ought to when they are having such fun."

In an old Bible History we own, the pictures are very poor. One incongruity particularly excites Douglas's derision. Elijah in two pictures (illustrations of one transaction) is represented as a middle-aged smooth-faced man and as an aged man with a beard, — and all in an hour's time. Once when Douglas was shut up in the house with a cold, he

wanted to color Abbey's illustrations of "She Stoops to Conquer." I suppose some people would have thought it a shame to let him do it ; but I thought it the best lesson I could give him in drawing. He always uses my paints, and he washes the colors very daintily about the outlines ; so with delicate colors and care, and after long consultations with me as to the ladies' gowns, the pictures were finished.

Of course Elinor, little mocking-bird, wanted to paint too ; but she was quite content to take one color, green or blue, and "smooch" it all over the pictures. One day she stood watching Douglas for a long time as he worked, and then she came to me with a troubled look in her eyes.

"Mamma," she said, "I want some skin-color."

That was the end of paintings in one color for Elinor. One day, when she was over two years old, she made a sudden attempt to draw from life. She had our pretty nurse sit down motionless ; she herself had often been model for my cousin Pauline, and knew how the thing was done. She folded Mary's hands, she arranged her dress ; then seating herself with a big piece of paper, she began to put Mary's eyes up in one corner of the paper, her white teeth (which Mary could not conceal for laughter) in another corner, her nose somewhere in the middle,

with no sign of an outline of a head, and no proper relation of one feature to another. She was thoroughly pleased with her performance too, and showed it round as Mary's portrait.

What a glimpse that gave me into the vacant art department of my daughter's mind !

In her ordinary drawing, Elinor makes the legs come right out of the neck, which is a strange but common error in the drawings of little children. As Elinor is a sensible child and constantly looking at good pictures, I can't understand this. Still I need not wonder at my little maid when I remember a picture which was once shown me, "an oil picture," as the owner proudly explained, in which the shadows fell in two directions, — those from the house to the right, and from a neighboring castle and tree to the left. The mountains were as smooth and round as moulds of blancmange ; and up a pine-tree in the foreground a tiger was climbing for dear life, to escape an elephant that was vigorously prodding him from below.

The woman to whom this picture belonged lived in a charming country, with the "Adriondacks," as she called them, in the distance. She had looked on fair skies and beautiful foliage, on sun and shadow, all her life. Why was it that she could n't see that this picture

was a travesty on Nature? Perhaps she thought if the people at the antipodes are perverse enough to sleep while we wake, and wake while we sleep, everything was equally disordered and upset in their land; that tigers frequented castle-gardens in company with elephants, and that shadows fell both ways at once. She was a smart, quick-witted Yankee woman,—the best of housekeepers, and skilled at her needle; her eyes were quick enough to spy dust, and no pattern of knit or crocheted edging was too intricate for her. I wonder if perhaps such people do not look on pictures as they do on poetry, as something quite out of ordinary every-day life, in which one must excuse freaks of nature, as we give poetic license and let poets' people talk in rhyme, or look upon "As You Like It" not as an exhibition of real life, but as a romance.

When Pauline came to our house to sketch, she often used Douglas as a model. We used to discuss names for her pictures, and Douglas listened to these discussions with great apparent interest. One picture was painted in our dining-room; and he was delighted as he saw the carved old-fashioned mantelpiece appearing on the paper, and the various articles of furniture coming out one after another. Our pretty friend Dolly Newell sat idly by the spinning-wheel,

with drooping eyes, and a young gallant, Uncle Maurice, in oldtime costume, was standing in embarrassed silence on the other side, holding a large bouquet behind him which he had brought to present to Dolly.

Douglas was overjoyed. "Oh, what are you going to name it, Cousin Pauline and mamma? What's the picture's name?"

"I should name it 'The First Step,'" said I.

Pauline was pleased, and Douglas seemed satisfied. He was about five years old at this time and could cut very good figures of people and animals from paper, with his round-pointed scissors. That afternoon he cut a large goat out of brown paper, — an old Billy-goat with horns and a long beard, — and brought it to me to write "the name" on it.

"What shall we call it?" I asked.

"Call it 'The Sweet Light of Evening,'" said the little artist.

How merry we made over that! Dear Douglas, what's in a name? Of course he couldn't connect "The First Step" with a girl and a spinning-wheel and a young fellow in knickerbockers carrying a bunch of posies. I had named it, he evidently thought, as a boy is named Billy or Tommy, to suit his mother's taste, not to describe the boy's characteristics.

How pleasant it is when the children begin to see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand a little from our standpoints ! Then they begin to be the choicest of comrades with their fresh ways of looking and hearing.

I was glad this Spring when my boy came to me in haste, crying, "Oh, mother, come to the hall window to see something beautiful !" It *was* beautiful : the sky was clear above the wide brown fields ; in this broad background a man in a blue blouse and a red shirt was following a machine drawn by a white horse, — a machine which scattered a fertilizer in great wafts of dust from either side as it advanced. Beyond him a man was sowing seed, throwing it to right and left ; and we saw it all through a mass of white cherry-blossoms. As we stood looking at the picture, Susan Harris came up the stairs with a piece of ticking over her arms, on which she had been sewing. She stopped as she saw us looking from the window, and said, "It's turned out a good day, hain't it ? I needn't a-brought my umberella with me." Then she took another look ; "Well," she said in a tone of reproof, "there's William Evans with his red shirt sticking out under his blue jumper, — pretty well out-growed, I should say." Ah, Miss Harris, I'm afraid you never read the old story about "eyes and no cyes !"

Between Douglas and Elinor came "the little brother," — very near to Douglas, while indeed he was but a mere baby himself; but he adopted him at once. "Douglas's baby," he called him; "Douglas's baby," we all called him, — it almost seemed his name. He was still so little when he left us that to one who has never owned and lost a child, it would be a surpassing wonder, a thing inexplicable, how such a short tarrying of a little soul with us could leave us with so great a longing, and his loss with a wound too deep to heal. Douglas now remembers but one thing about him, — a day when Debby took him and the baby into a daisy-field, and the baby picked the white petals from the flowers, and threw them away, as fast as Douglas gave them to him.

The children like to listen to stories of the baby, of how he loved to watch the leaves fluttering in the trees, taking the waving of the branches as a special courtesy to him, and waving his little hand and bowing and smiling, saying "by-by." A single leaf he called a "by-by."

I think it is very wonderful to see how real love may exist without sight. Elinor, who has only heard of the baby, feels him to be as real and dear as I do. She knows he lives with Jesus, who is her friend, and who is ready to listen to her at any moment; and so she

may, she thinks, send messages to the "little brother" at any time. She often thanks God for him in her prayer, sends her love to him, and in the dark I often hear a little kiss which she adds to her night's greeting. Sometimes she sends kisses to others there whom she has loved.

For many years we went regularly for long Summers to the cottage by the Bay; then sickness and business separated us, and death came among us, and the cottage seemed like a pleasant memory alone. But it was still ours, and it was there we turned when the baby became ill. We hoped the sweet, invigorating air would restore him; alas, it could not! But it did much for me, and a sympathy seemed to come to me in my sorrow from the very sky and the familiar trees. They seemed like silent, tender friends.

I shall never forget the kindness of the village people. A man came one day to the kitchen door selling berries. Debby was there trying to amuse Douglas and keep him still. She told the man of our sick baby. "Yes, I know of it," he said. "I live some way out of the village, but I heard it mentioned in a prayer at the meeting last week. I am very sorry for you all."

The cook forgot one night to keep the baby's milk separate from the rest, — the milk that came from one

particular cow, — and it was after eight o'clock when Debby found that there was no milk to give him his medicine in.

“Oh, what shall we do?” I cried; “we can't get any till morning! Perhaps he won't touch his medicine in water, and he will cry for the milk!”

“I'll see what I can do,” said Debby. It hurt her almost as much as it did me to have the dear beautiful baby troubled.

The baby slept on past his hour for taking the milk. I wanted Debby. Hilda said she saw her go out of the gate. Half an hour and more went by. The night was dark; and a drizzling rain was falling. Still, mercifully the baby slept. Then I heard voices, and saw the glimmer of a lantern coming up the hill. Presently our gate latch clicked, and then I heard Debby's voice in the kitchen. In a moment more she came to me with a little pitcher in her hand.

“I got it,” she said in triumph. “Cap'n Darling went to the pasture and milked Kitty. I thought Mrs. Darling might have a little of Kitty's milk by itself, and so I just ran down to see. The house was all dark; but I knocked at the door, and after a while Mrs. Darling put her head out of the end window, with a nightcap on, and asked what I wanted. She said the cap'n was in bed and had a real bad pain,

but she 'd see what he could do ; she knew there was n't a bit of Kitty's milk in the house. Then she lighted a lamp and let me in, and Cap'n Darling dressed himself ; and when he found it was raining he came back and put on that big yellow oil-skin coat he goes fishing in, and a cap like it, and lit a lantern, and went into the field and milked Kitty. It took him a long time, he said, to find Kitty in the dark ; he thought the huckleberry-bushes were cows two or three times, and then he got the wrong cow ; but here the milk is. He walked up the hill to light me."

"How good he was !" I said.

"I don't know as you ever heard, Mrs. Burroughs," said Debby, "that they had another child besides that son who died a few years ago?"

"No," I said.

"Well," continued Debby, "he said they lost a little girl long ago ; and ever since we came he felt awful sorry for us and the sick baby. Mrs. Darling took a lamp in the parlor while he was out, and showed me the picture of the little girl in one of those old-fashioned little covers. She was a real pretty child. It seems hard not to have one left when they are old."

Poor Cap'n Darling ! He had done that kindness

out of love for a little child who had been dead for thirty years. How beautiful love is ! I sat and thought of it by the dear baby's bed in the darkness, and it comforted me.

With the very last day of Summer the baby went from us. So sweet he looked, his little cheeks and hands still brown from the Summer sun and air in which he had lived, lying freshly dressed in his own little bed. The woodbine covered the little white-curtained window at the foot of the bed. I didn't wish a flower about him. He never had had flowers about him when he slept.

Dear little lamb ! I could not bear to touch his cold cheek, but I laid my cheek softly on his light hair again and again and again ; it was the only caress I could give and not be chilled to my heart.

I shall never forget that morning when Allan and I went down the street toward the East Bay, with the heaviest hearts we had ever carried. It was a fresh, sweet day, with a light breeze blowing ; all the willow-trees were bending and swaying, and the white oaks with their stout trunks, rich in silver bark and golden lichens, fluttered their pale-green leaves against the fair blue sky, as we had seen them hundreds of times before. All along the roadside the wild pinks were fragrant.

As we turned the corner by the big willows, we came suddenly upon the wide stretch of the Bay and sea. The soft noise of the waves upon the beach reached us long before the sight of them. There, too, was the white cottage on the low hillside where we were going, with the great poplars in front and the yard full of gay flowers. Yet my heart failed me as I saw it, for we were going there for the little baby's last bed.

We went up the narrow path bordered with white shells, saw the parrot sitting on his perch by the kitchen door,—the parrot which the sailor son had brought from Brazil. Mrs. Day stood waiting for us at the open door. She held my hand close as she wished me good-morning. We went into the little sitting-room and sat down in silence, for we could not speak.

"I know what you've come for," she said in a minute. "My husband is n't at home, but I can attend to it as well as he can." Her eyes filled with tears. "I felt real sorry for you," she said, "when I heard of it yesterday. I've known the same trouble three times."

"How did you bear it?" I asked her. "It seems to me I cannot live with this aching heart. I can't think of anything else. It seems to me that my heart beats, 'baby, baby, baby,' asleep and awake."

“You know this is your first loss by death,” she said. “The first I knew of it too was when I lost my first baby; but I never felt that same grief again, though I’ve lost two children since and many friends. It seemed before the baby died that none of *my* folks *could* die, and now I know they can just like other people’s. The first time is the worst time.

“I’ll take you to the shop now,” she said, rising; and we followed her through a long pleasant kitchen to a back-yard which was fenced in with a white-washed fence, and seemed a sort of cosey out-of-door room. We crossed the yard to the shop. “It is an odd shop,” she said, replying to Allan’s look of surprise. “It used to be a deck-house on a schooner. My husband bought it and put a second story on it to dry cranberries in; and he works at his carpentering in this room. I suppose it does look queer to see the bulging sides and the little slanting windows.”

The sun streamed into the long narrow room. The floor was covered with shavings, and the air was sweet with the smell of pine wood. In a minute Mrs. Day brought from an inner room a little white casket and laid it on the carpenter’s bench by which we stood. None of us could speak for tears. It seemed to me my heart must break. At last she said (her hand on mine), “No matter how resigned we are to God’s

will, no matter if we do know that the baby is far better off, the pain must come. Oh, I wish I could put two years over your head! Time does help to heal."

"It never can heal my sorrow," I cried; "the sun can never shine the same for me. My life will never be the same."

"No, the sorrow will never leave you," she answered quietly; "but by that time you will have got used to bearing the pain. It will not be a surprise to you any more, nor a strange thing that you think of all the time. I surely ought to know," she added.

I put my hand upon the lining of the little casket. "It feels so hard," I said. "I know that it is foolish to say it, but could it be made a little softer?"

"To be sure it can," she said. "I'll do it myself. I am about as handy with tools as father and the boys. Why, I've some wool my sister-in-law from Vermont sent me from her own sheep. I'll untack the lining and put a soft layer of that all round the sides and across the bottom. Would that comfort you?"

I could only smile gratefully. Wasn't that a motherly thing to offer?

"Then this evening after dark," she said, "I'll let my Willy carry it to your house."

“Oh,” I said, “it is dreadful to think of putting my baby in the ground. I feel as if I could never sleep, thinking of the cold rains and snow on that little spot.”

“Why do you have it done, then?” she said. “The tomb has just been fixed over. It is whitewashed all sweet and clean inside, and the floor is spread with sea-sand, and nobody has been laid there except Mary Fletcher ; you knew her. Her husband wants to buy a lot in the town he lives in, in Vermont, so she is there still.”

Yes, I had known her, — a quiet, gentle little woman to whom I would have trusted my baby at any time ; and it was strange how this relieved me, — the very thought eased the pain.

The little graveyard was familiar to me too. It lies on a hillside sloping toward the south, and from it you can look down on the sea with the white-sailed boats and the far-off ships, dim and ghostly on the horizon as if they were bearing souls away to the world invisible. Nature had been left to brighten the spot in her own way. The fairest grasses, and wild roses, and daisies, and later, golden rod and asters, in wonderful color and of many kinds, glorified the place. It lay in peace and quietness day and night, like a chamber of rest, with no sounds but the breath of the

winds and the measured rush of the sea waves on the shore.

We went out through the gate in the white fence into the side-yard, where the barn stood. I knew that barn when it was an old windmill and stood in Mr. Abram Wilder's field, throwing its aimless arms about in every breeze. I remembered when it was moved here and made into a barn,—an odd barn, with a base broader than its top, and the door opening in the inclined plane of the side. Mrs. Day offered to harness up the horse if we would wait, and take us home.

But no ; I wanted to walk. It seemed to me that I never could rest again, — that I must walk and work without ceasing. Mrs. Day gave me a sprig of lemon verbena which she picked through the whitewashed fence, and stood looking after us as we went down the road.

A little farther on we met Henry Leeds, driving in his open wagon, and as usual sitting in his green chair, as if he had just lifted a portion of his kitchen floor and what happened to be standing on it upon wheels, and started off. He drove up to the path when he saw us, stopped and held out his hand to me, and then to Allan. "I only just heard of it to the store," he said. "The Lord comfort you and help you to bear it ! Can I do anything for you?"

We thanked him and said no ; but we should have said that he already had done us a kindness, as had the kindly woman we had just left, for my heart was not as heavy going home as when I came.

But, oh, that little room in the cottage ! We could not bear to go in ; we could not bear to stay away. Little Douglas had peeped in, and gone away whispering, "I must step softly ; Debby won't like it if I wake her baby."

The next morning Mrs. Darling, who was very feeble, came toiling up the hill to the cottage. She brought with her a little cream jug, shaded from purple to gold with a gilded band of roughened china round it, and purple flowers about the base, — a very pretty old-fashioned thing. She said she had heard that I was fond of old-fashioned china, and so she had brought me this ; it had belonged to her grandmother. Then she took from her bag a daguerreotype and showed me the picture of the little daughter of whom Debby had told me, — a sweet-faced child. She told me that she used to dress her for church in a light blue merino and a little lace cape with the "pattern run in," and blue ribbons on her hat. She told me what the neighbors had said about her, — the little Elizabeth, — of how she would sit by her in the Summer afternoons and sew on her "patch," and how

sweet her voice was for singing. No one could guess what a comfort it was to me to listen to her.

It seemed to me that I belonged with her to a band whose hearts were bound together by a secret which could not be known till this sorrow had been tasted ; and people who knew it not seemed to offer words without meaning when they tried to comfort me. If a stranger said to me, "I've known it," it was like balm to my wound.

That same day we sat in the little parlor, Allan and I, with idle hands. It seemed to me, after the haste, the sleepless days and nights, that the very world had ceased to move. Over and over rang these little lines through my head, —

"Only the dear God knows how hearts
Beat on, the while they break."

Captain Darling came in at the open door. He was a town officer and had come to ask the baby's name and age. It was comforting to have a kind and sympathizing neighbor come on this errand. "My wife told me she'd been here to-day," he said. "She told you that we'd been through with all this trouble. Since you've been here, wife and I have talked over our loss a good deal, and it seems very fresh and near to us, though it was thirty year ago, come 3d of

next October." His honest, kindly eyes were full of tears. He shook my hand, still held it, and shook it again. Then he took Allan's hand.

Allan asked him about the tomb. Surely, surely, he said, we could lay the baby in the "new tomb." He'd attend to all that; and if after a while, we wanted a little grave, if we'd just write to him he'd do it all himself, near his own plot; and he added, "I used to tend the baby a good deal," as if to prove to us that it would be lovingly done.

"Nobody can help you bear it," he said, turning to go, and yet loath to leave us. "I would help you if I could. It seems almost as if the Lord did n't help, but He does; if He did n't, and you did n't know you'd see the child again, you'd feel the difference."

VIII.

ONE morning Douglas and I started off together, as we had done so often, for the intelligence office. It turned out a day of good luck for us. On this day our star was propitious, and I engaged the very first nurse I spoke to. Her references were excellent, and she really was attractive, — fresh, rosy, and buxom. I felt that she was to prove a comfort to me. Having settled the hour of her coming, and having selected a train for her and marked the time-table, which looked with its rows of figures like a multiplication-table, Douglas and I set out for a little merry-making, — a mild one, to be sure, but anything assumes an air of festivity which frees one from an intelligence office.

First, we went to a bird-store in a distant side street, — a place that we had discovered by chance one day, — a bird-store where guinea-pigs were also to be found, and doves and a cage of monkeys. There was a peacock there too, boxed in a cage of slats between which he thrust his neck of exquisite blue, — or was

it green, or was it gold? Something was wanting about that peacock: it must have been a big vase and a balustrade, such as always accompany peacocks in pictures. But we really went to see the monkeys. There was a bold, bad old monkey in a cage in the window. He stared at the people that crowded about the window, turning his head and gazing critically, as if they were monkeys and he were the spectator. There were also two little monkeys, — new arrivals, timid, gentle little creatures, that sat in the corner farthest from the window, with their backs toward the crowd and with their arms about each other.

We went into the store. We had been there before to call on the monkeys and birds, and the store-keeper was glad to see us. When he saw the red apple Douglas had brought, he took out a big jack-knife and cut it in quarters for the monkey. As I reached the cage with a piece of apple in my fingers, it slipped to the floor. As I stooped to get it, I was struck, as it seemed, by a blizzard. My veil was torn off, my bonnet dragged to one side, my hair pulled over my forehead with a jerk that brought the tears to my eyes.

The man rushed to my rescue, and delivered me from the long hairy arm of the bad old monkey, who retired, chattering, to the end of the cage. There was a shout of derisive glee from the boys outside. The

man kindly straightened my bonnet, according to a man's light, — for there was no looking-glass there ; and after we had made believe that we wanted to look at bird-seed and white mice for ten minutes, till a fresh relay of boys had appeared outside, we went out hastily, and looking no man in the face hurried to the block below, where there was a little circulating library and shop of old books kept by a woman. This woman owned a looking-glass, and aided by it I made myself fairly presentable. It took some time, and she had to bring me a little tomato pin-cushion, with needles and a spool of silk, that I might securely sew on again the knot of velvet that the monkey had nearly pulled from my bonnet.

As I sat and sewed, I felt as if I must have been invited to spend the day and bring my work with me ; and I became, so to speak, rather intimate with the “ circulating librarian,” as she called herself. Among other things we discussed primers ; I wanted one for Elinor, and there were several kinds in the store. One of them contained such exercises as these, —

“ B-e-l-l-e, a fine young lady.

“ B-e-l-l, a sounding vessel,” —

and the following lines, which were surely concocted by Dr. Johnson, —

"T-o-l-l, a sum exacted by law for passage on a private way.

"T-o-l-l, the repeated reverberation of a bell."

The little shop was narrow and low, and the walls were covered with books. I picked up "The Mother's Recompense" and "Home Influence" — how old they made me feel! — and then the "Lamp-lighter."

"Do you have any call for these books?" said I. "I should think the new cheap novels would entirely take the place of them."

"Oh, these are not to sell; they belong to our circulating library," said the woman. "They've just come in and haven't been covered yet, but they'll take. Anything about 'mother' or 'home' is sure to take."

"Or about heaven?" I suggested.

"No, oh, no," said she; "sermons don't take at all in circulating libraries."

These titles had revived old memories. "Do T. S. Arthur's books sell? Do you keep them? Do you have 'Maiden, Wife, and Mother?'" I asked at a venture.

"Oh, yes, we always keep them, and they circulate well."

"And Rev. E. P. Roe," I asked, "his books, I suppose, are always out?"

"Always," she said. "One is hardly returned before it is out again. For deep books," she went on, — "for deep books and for old valuable books, my husband has a fine trade. Learned gentlemen come here when they are writing on great subjects, and want to hunt up old books. My husband can always put them on the track of them."

She brought a curious edition of Bunyan to show me, — poems, so called, and fugitive pieces, illustrated with fine freedom, — a freedom which released the artist altogether from the restraints of truth and fact. A boy chased a butterfly bigger than his head, waving a hat that would have fitted the butterfly; and "the fowler that set the snare" captured a perfect megatherium.

A large window at the end of the store looked out into a paved yard in which stood one fine tree. There was a little space between the houses at the rear, so that there was a patch of blue sky to be seen beyond the tree-branches. The tree was just coming into leaf.

"Beautiful, is n't it?" said the woman, looking toward the window. "I often," she continued, "hold a book up just under my eyes to shut off the brick walls and the tree-trunk, and with those budding branches against the sky I can quite imagine myself out in

the country. It must be getting beautiful there now. Have you seen it this Spring?"

"I live in the country," I said.

"Oh, what a pleasure! My husband and I hope to own a little place in the country sometime; and are the apple-trees in blossom?"

A little old woman in a brown Mother Hubbard, with a black-lace cap with purple ribbons, — she was the husband's mother, — was sitting by the window. She broke in here to say that when she was a young girl in England, she used to think the first primrose was worth a fortune. Her father was a haberdasher in London, and they seldom went out into the country, so that the primroses really made Summer for them.

"They carried them about London streets to sell," she said, "in great baskets on their backs; and I suppose they do still. And, oh, it was a fine sight in May to see the blooming plants hawked about the streets, and every window-sill, from cellar to attic, from the little houses near the mews to the grand folk's homes in the squares, all with window-boxes glowing with flowers! But I've never been back to see it."

"It is all there is to see still," I said. "Only a few years ago I was in London in the Spring, and the window-boxes were full of geranium, and Covent

Garden Market was like Summer itself with armfuls of wall-flower and roses ; and the men went about selling the potted plants in hand-carts, and calling, —

“ ‘ Flowers a-growin’ ! Flowers a-bloin’ ! ’ ”

“ And the little girls cryin’ early in the mornin’, ‘ Water cresses ! Water cresses ! ’ in a sort of tune ? ” she asked.

“ Yes, just the same.”

“ Ay,” she said, “ all goes on the same ; but the ones who made England dear to me have all gone to a better country. Oh, when I was married and came here, I used to be longin’ and longin’ to get back to England ! But now they are all gone ; it is n’t England at all that I long for now, but for that land. Catharine here,” she continued, “ and my son, they are always hopin’ that the next Spring they’ll have a home in the country, for they are young [Catharine was every day of sixty], but I shall soon see the leaves of the Tree of Life. I’m eighty-five years old. But ’t is a pleasant thought ; ’t is a pleasant thought ! It cheers me to sit and think of it.”

Douglas, who had been listening attentively to the old woman, gathering the idea that she was anxious to get to some pleasant country place she had in mind, stepped up to her and said, —

“ Why, you ought to come and live at our house ;

we have plenty of trees and flowers, and there are lots of people in our town."

"Bless your little heart!" said the old woman, — "bless your little heart! I thank you, but soon I am goin' to a pleasanter town and pleasanter house than yours, fine as they may be. Don't ye know where people go when they get through with this world?"

"Oh, did you mean that you are going to heaven?" said Douglas, his face lighting up with a pleasant surprise. "I know all about heaven. My brother lives there, and lots of my friends, and my grandmother too. You'll like her. They'll look out for you. My brother will be good to you; you must tell him about me. Are you going soon?"

"God willin'," said the old woman.

I could n't bear to go away, but we had to. We parted like old friends, and when we were walking to the house where I was to verify one of my new nurse's references we planned about sending a big box of apple-blossoms to surprise our new acquaintances.

"And would n't it be nice to put that bird's nest in the box with the blossoms?" said Douglas; "and you could write a note to say that we did n't steal it from a bird, but just found it on the path after a high wind. She was a nice old lady," continued he, after a pause, "I think they'll like her up in heaven."

I like to see the inside of houses. Rooms are almost like people ; they are like people's biographies, surely. They tell of the taste of the owner, be they ever so poor.

We went up the steps of an old-fashioned house on a corner. It was surrounded by shabby boarding-houses, and the busy streets of shops were only round the corner ; but it had a respectable air that shamed the neighborhood. A middle-aged servant opened the door and put us into the parlor, where we sat in silence and looked about us. The room had very high ceilings, yellow walls, and a great deal of stucco ornament like wedding-cake trimming about the cornices. There were tall shaded marble vases on the mantel, and a worsted-work Eli and Samuel over it. After the omnipresent peacock plush and red plush and old-gold plush and ebony and cherry, it was not only a relief to see mahogany-and-haircloth furniture, but it was positively a pleasure to my eye. Douglas, to be sure, slipped off his seat every time he moved, but he liked that. The old piano had square legs. There were indifferent portraits in oil on the wall, and the usual pale lifeless water-color flowers of school-days long gone by. Under the pier-table was a sanded board with a weeping willow on it, all made of crimped green tissue-paper. And it was a wonder how that lit-

the gilt milking-stool had forced its way into this parlor, — a little milking-stool with apple-blossoms painted on it, and its legs tied up with a bow of ribbons, orange and green. Poor little milking-stool, without its cow and its maid and its grassy field ! How lonely it must have felt in a parlor ! On the door hung a banner of purple velvet trimmed with gold fringe, and on the banner these consoling words, “Ever Faithful.” Whether the banner was faithful to the door, or faithful to the family, it did not say ; but so long as it was faithful to its own ideal, whatever its ideal might be, it is enough.

Behind the sofa, with its claw-feet, I saw two little portraits in water-color, about the size of miniatures. They were framed in deep unburnished gilt frames. They were charming, so lifelike and attractive. One was of an old man sitting in his shirt-sleeves working away with a chisel on a wooden eagle he was carving. His sleeves were a pale pink, and his vest a gray-blue ; and he worked away for dear life on his eagle, and his spectacles were set back on his forehead. He was so absorbed in his work that you’d have had to shake him before he would hear you call him to dinner.

The old woman in the other frame sat calmly knitting with her eyes on her work. She had a

close thin muslin cap on her head through which her hair showed, and the strings were thrown over her shoulders as if she were warm. She had a gray gown on and a white kerchief round her neck, and she looked as alive and real as many a live old lady I have seen, sitting and knitting and thinking in the leisure hour before tea.

We heard steps approaching, and I settled myself properly on the haircloth sofa. An old lady and another lady, whom I knew to be a maiden daughter, came in. They had pleasant manners and made excuses for delaying me. The mother was old, and knew it, and was content. But "Miss Matilda," with her big front piece of frizzes, and her large panier and superabundance of false teeth, was making a determined clutch at departing youth; and she it must have been that imported the milking-stool and the banner into this ancient parlor. Poor Miss Matilda! "I insist on belonging to this day and generation," she seemed to say by her youthful manner.

I asked about my new nurse, who had lived with Mrs. Frothingham's married daughter, and my impressions were confirmed. Mary Shannon was a treasure. Then I told them how charming I thought the portraits.

The elder lady was pleased; but she evidently

thought little of my taste in preferring the little water-colors to the big oil portraits. I don't know why oil pictures are treated by so many people with a respect which is not granted by them to water-colors. Oil and water are both cheap enough, for that matter.

Mrs. Frothingham kept the little portraits, she said, because her cousin, Mr. Frederic Bowers, who was an artist, painted them of her aunt and uncle, "just as he caught them one day," — I knew that well. He had painted a picture of that same sort of her brother in his youth, and she sent Miss Matilda to fetch it from her chamber.

"This was my brother," she said. He was a sweet, bright-faced young fellow in a jacket with a blue ribbon at his throat and a turn-over white collar.

"My brother John," she said ; "he became a clergyman, — Rev. John Hubert."

My eyes flew wide open.

"Not the old minister that lived so long in our town? Miss Lois was n't your sister, was she?" I cried.

"Yes, yes !" said the old lady, delighted. "Did you know her? Did you know Brother John?"

I had been so pleased to hear of her friends that it was something of a come-down to say that my

acquaintance with them had only begun after their decease. But she was pleased to hear of the oleander-tree, and of the kind things I had heard of her brother and sister in our town. Poor old lady, she seemed as pleased as if I had brought a message to her from the spirit world ! She said I might have a copy made of Brother John's picture, and any other of the portraits I wished. She had no picture of Miss Lois, but she had a photograph of her. I was afraid to look at it. I was glad Miss Matilda could n't find it. The old lady was going to make Miss Matilda go into the attic and look in the trunks for it, but I said I must hasten to my train ; and I parted with them as with new-found relatives.

The city horse-car that carries us to our railroad station is a dark-red one with black trimming. That day we underwent the usual experience of country people, who, with just time to catch the train, see car after car appear and disappear, — all but the right one. We saw the green car, and the yellow, and the dark-green with orange trimming, and the light-yellow with brown trimming, roll by. At last the red car did come.

I often pity the drivers and conductors on the horse-cars on the road. They have to eat their meals out of tin pails right under the eyes of the passengers ;

but one day I saw a pleasant sight. A young woman in a fresh calico gown and big white apron brought the conductor his luncheon in a basket. She met the car at the foot of the hill, and got in and sat with the young fellow in one corner while he ate his dinner. He spread a fresh white napkin in his lap and ate with a plated fork. They talked and laughed in an undertone, and made a little home in the corner. The car seemed to me, the only occupant, to be their dining-room, and the long narrow advertisements of Sapolio and shoes, and the warnings to passengers, to melt into mottoes of "Welcome" and "God bless our Home;" and I felt as if I were an ill-bred person who had intruded on a private family.

When we reached home, Scott came over the fence like a bird on the wing. Far down the street he had taken us for enemies, for spies, for sons of Belial, and barked at us with his legs apart; but a wave of Douglas's hand and a yodle, and he came dashing toward us, wild with joy. And so we went on, protesting against his embraces and kisses, and taking up his mind by throwing sticks for him to chase.

That very same evening, as we were just through tea, there were wafted in the sounds of music. It was "ground out" music, to be sure, but it was all the same to the children. Elinor got down from her

chair after a struggle, and ran to the window, looked out, and then turned to me with a radiant face.

"Mother, it is my old organ-grinder man, — my dear old friend," she said; "and he has a monkey, a live, winking monkey."

"I dare say, Mary," said Allan, "it has got round that you have a monkey mania. How many monkeys does this make to-day?"

Douglas was at the window; Allan went too, and the table was deserted. The monkey climbed to the piazza and jumped upon the rocking-horse, old "Rough and Ready," choosing to sit facing the horse's tail. He wore red breeches, a little cutaway coat, and a bonnet with feathers, — a real Mrs. Boffin bonnet. Elinor wanted at once to know if he was a lady or gentleman monkey. We had to take the children out to feed the monkey. He accepted a cracker and ate it contentedly till a tea-cake was handed him, when he laid the cracker on the path. He climbed the trees, he churned with a toy churn, he swept the gravel with a tiny broom, he fiddled on a little fiddle, but all with such a solemn air, as if he saw no fun in the thing himself, but was willing to amuse us for a consideration.

Elinor slipped into the house and helped herself from the cake-basket. She gave her "dear old friend" a

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handful of cake, which he stopped to take right in the middle of "The Sweet By-and-By," making the present a long-drawn groan.

Elinor wanted the monkey to perform his tricks over again, but the man shook his head. "Too tire, monkey work all day, monkey too tire." The poor little monkey did look tired. He sat on the grass and leaned against a tree-trunk. Scott, who had not been thought of, came running from behind the house; but he stopped with his legs outspread, and peered round the corner like one inspecting a suspicious character. He barked short, frightened barks. Allan invited him to join us, but he dashed upon the piazza, with his tail between his legs, and disappeared in the house. We found him afterward under the nursery bed, trembling with terror. I suppose it was a shock to his nervous system to see that little black old man, as he supposed, covered with fur and adorned with a long tail. In a minute the little monkey sprang upon the organ, then upon the shoulder of the Italian, comfortably settled his head, put both arms round the old man's neck, and looked at us, blinking his white eyes under his bonnet.

The old man laughed. "Too tire," he said, and patted his little partner. Elinor wished to walk up the road a little way to "welcome them off;" but we

persuaded her to stand on the gate-post and wave a farewell. "Come to-morrow," she called; and the old man nodded and waved his hand as well as he could with his monkey round his neck and the organ on his back.

Douglas watched him up the road. "He looks like Pilgrim's Progress with the burden of sin on his back," he said.

IX.

TIBBIE had a cousin, "Tammass," — the father of Rob, whom Tibbie had with her when we first met her. We had a great respect for Tammass from all we heard of him from Tibbie. We had never seen him, for he was a sailor and seldom at home. And then there was another cousin who was a "rigger;" he had formerly been a sailor too, — he went to sea first when he was nine years old, and had a medal from the Marquis of Lorne for saving a life. In Tibbie's album we met these and many other worthies face to face. "Me only brither Sandy," and "me only sister Winifred, wha lives in Toronto wi' me faither's sister," and "Mrs. Clark" and all the other goodly company were there.

There came a sunny Sunday in May, when the trees, white with blossoms, stood like tents on the green grass, and the long rows of maples were in leaf, and the unopened leaves of grape-vines were pink like rosebuds, and the bare branches of the locusts tried in vain to persuade us that Winter

lingered,—in vain, since a Summer sky blessed the day, and the bluebirds had dared the sparrows. To crown this sweet day with glory, just before dinner, as Douglas was sitting on the kitchen steps, up the walk, in at the gate, along the path to the well, came Sandy.

Douglas divined who it was at once. Overjoyed, he rushed into the kitchen, crying, “Tibbie, Sandy’s come.”

Tibbie ran to the door, and cried, “Saw ye Johnny comin’?”

“Ay, but wi’oot his white cockade or his doggie rinnin’,” replied Sandy, laughing. Sure enough, it was Sandy in the flesh.

When he was seated in the kitchen, Douglas stood before him, gazing in unfeigned admiration. Here was the hero at last, with light hair, sunburnt face, and bright blue eyes like Tibbie’s, and with the very anchor on his right hand that Tibbie had described, and the thistle, and cross and crown on his wrist, and on the other hand lots of little pictures,—oars crossed, and a flag. And though Douglas could not see through the coat-sleeve, he knew that on his right arm was printed, “Alexander David Drummond, Glasgow, Scotland;” and he knew that all across his breast was drawn in blue a big ship under full sail,—

"The Caledonia." Ah, *that* Douglas could see, he almost believed, right through the coat and shirt. This was surely a brother worth owning, one who could pour out tales of adventure, and was himself a real picture-book besides. He was rich too, in Douglas's eyes ; for Tibbie had boasted of his wonderful wages as a first-class rigger and ship-carpenter, as well as sailor.

"And this laddie," said Tibbie, introducing Douglas, "is a Scottish American, like what ye are yoursel', Sandy. Do ye mind the day ye begged me mither for a pair of bittes [boots], an' she sayed 'Ye maun bide a wee till after the queen's taxes is paid'? An ye flung yoursel' on the floor a-cryin' oot, 'What's the queen's taxes?' an' she sayed tae yer, 'The money we has to give to support the queen ;' an' ye shrieked oot, 'The beggar ! An' hae I to gae wi'oot me bittes tae support the queen? I'll none o' her !' "

Sandy "minded" it.

Then Douglas had to ask Sandy if he had the famous medal about him, but Sandy said that was "behind" in Scotland.

"Oh," said little Douglas, "I thought you wore it round your neck on a string ;" adding immediately, "Were you ever wrecked on a desert island?"

"No, but I've been wrecked."

Just then Tibbie announced that dinner was ready,

and Douglas went reluctantly to the dining-room. Soon after dinner Sandy had to go back to the city. It was a blow to Douglas ; but he followed the hero to the big gate, climbed on the gate-post and watched him till he turned the corner to the station.

But this was only one hero, the leader of a procession of heroes, and Sunday was the best day to expect them. Douglas would run home before us from church, and rush to the kitchen crying, "Tibbie, did any come?"

Behold, one Sunday, there was Johnny McPhail, steward on the Thistle Line. Douglas was very proud to be of the same blood as these distinguished guests of Tibbie's. If Tibbie forgot to mention the fact, he announced it himself, — "I'm most half Scotch."

"Indeed," says Johnny McPhail, "ye look all Scotch ; an' can ye say 'Good-night' in Scotch?"

"Guid-nicht," says Douglas.

"I'll accept ye for me countryman now," says Johnny.

"But I'll have to vote in America," says Douglas, "because I was born here, and the American flag is my own flag."

"I'll allow ye to do that too," says Johnny, "for I'm a good bit of an American mysel', for I'm goin' to marry an American girl."

Then Douglas took a chair near Johnny to hear Tibbie tell, amid bursts of laughter, how she had taken Willy Todd, — “Wully Toad,” she called him, — “for to show him the city.”

“The innocent !” she cried, “all gotten up in his hame claes.” She had taken him, she said, in the elevated cars, where he sat for a while quite unconscious that he was creating a sensation “in his tartan breeks and vest and a big bonnet wi’ a cock’s plume on his heid, an’ a silver thistle on a big Cairngorm stone in his cravat, and a big club o’ a staff. But at last says he, ‘Tibbie’, says he, ‘what ails ye, lass, that the folk are a-speerin’ at ye?’ Says I, burstin’ oot laughin’, — seein’ the eyes o’ all glistenin’ aboot me, — says I, ‘Wully, ye daft laddie, they ’re a-speerin’ at ye. Dinna ye see ye’re a show?’ An’ never could Bell McKenzie nor me get him oot agin, till he war all rigged out anew.”

Johnny McPhail laughed. “The last time I saw Wully,” said he, “was in Glasgow, where he was a-stayin’ wi’ the Maxwells a week or twa before sailin’, and Tam Maxwell was jeerin’ at him for always a-sayin’ tae everything, ‘Dae it as unto the Lord;’ an’ he was that afeared o’ the City o’ Sin, as he cal’d Glasgow, that he always went aboot wi’ his Bible in his hand. ‘Will ye gae tae the theatre?’

Tam asket him one night. Says he quite simple like, 'Can I dae it as unto the Lord?'"

But Tibbie would n't laugh now. "There is a queerness," said she, shaking her head, "that we a' should follow after, instead o' laughin' at them that has it."

Here Douglas, who felt that a blight had fallen upon the merry talk, asked "Mister McPhail" if he could dance a Highland fling; and that caused Johnny to describe the Caledonian games, and then he promised to come out some time and bring a pair of stilts for Douglas. Then, alas, Johnny McPhail had to go away too!

One Sunday afternoon Douglas was sitting in the study with me, and on his feet were fastened his new skates, which, although it was now Summer, had just been given him, at his special request, for a birthday present. We were conversing on two subjects, — he on one and I on the other.

"This is the road the conquerors took when they came into Babylon, Douglas," said I, pointing to a crooked red line on the map spread before us.

"Can you tell the new engine by its whistle, mother?" said he.

"No, my dear; and here is the —"

"Why, mother! *can't* you? It is just as easy; it

gives three little toots and then a whistle. Did n't you know which engines went by the church, this morning, — the Tilly West and the North End?"

"Well, we'll talk about the engines by and by. I am going to tell you now about the wonderful hanging gardens of Babylon. Right in there —"

"The name of the new engine is the Raven's Head," said Douglas. "You've noticed how much larger it is than the North End, haven't you?"

"I didn't know they had a new engine," I said. "Now, right here —"

"Why, it was put on last Thursday! You went in with it! What engine did you think you went in with?"

"I did n't know. I don't know any of the engines by the whistles," I had to admit. "Now, these gardens were one of the Seven —"

"Why, you ought to learn them," said Douglas.

"Douglas," said I, "I want you to look at this map and pay attention. Do you see this line?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, that is where the conquerors came —"

"I learned them all in one day," said Douglas; "so could you if you tried. Every time one whistled at the station, I ran to the corner to see its name, and —"

Suddenly a change came upon Douglas's face, as he looked out at the open window.

"A whole lot of Tibbie's Scotchmen!"

Sure enough! five brawny Scotchmen were coming in at the gate. Tibbie too had spied them as they turned to the kitchen piazza.

"Tam, is it ye?"

"It's me, Tibbie, lass; hoo are ye?"

"Where's me marmalade?"

"I'm not frae Scotland at a'. I'm just frae Injy."

"Why didna ye fetch Bell Mackim along?"

Then their voices were lost in the kitchen.

Presently Tibbie appeared at my door all radiant. "Mrs. Burroughs," she cried, "sax great Scotchmen frae Injy, and what'll I dae wi' 'em? Not one soul o' 'em hae I seen for four years!"

"Ask them to take tea with you if you wish to," said I, "if you've got enough for a bite about."

"Oh, let me take tea with them too," cried Douglas. "Tibbie, can't I? I'm more'n half Scotch, and my name's Scotch, and I know about Burns, Tibbie."

"Of course ye can, if your mither'll lat ye," said Tibbie.

"You'd better let Tibbie have her company to her-

self at tea," said I; "but you and Elinor may see them while she is getting tea for us."

"And take Scott too," cried Douglas. "I guess they'll think we are all right if we have a Scotch dog."

At the eager sound of Douglas's voice Elinor had run in from the nursery. She finally took in the situation. "Oh, put on my plaid dress to please Tibbie's Scotchmen," she cried; "and I'll go down and say 'guid-by' to them."

"You must n't say that. You must say 'Guid-day' to them," said Douglas, in a superior way.

Tibbie was well pleased that her guests were so satisfactory. "I'll just boil a pot o' potatoes and boil eggs and beat up a bowl of pease-brose and mak' a cup o' coffee," said she, beaming, "an' many thanks, Mistress Burroughs."

Elinor's plaid dress was now on. Scott was on the alert to see his countrymen, and the children followed Tibbie downstairs.

"Ho!" cried a man's voice as the procession entered the kitchen, "here are twa laddies an' a collie-dug."

"I'm not a laddie," said Elinor; "I'm a lassie. Tibbie says I'm a Lowland lass because I eat pease-brose for my breakfast."

“An’ sae ye are,” replied Tibbie; “an’ noo stan’ up an’ say ‘Wully Wunkie’ for ‘em.”

Tibbie was still excited when evening came and the party of friends had departed. “Oh, Mistress Burroughs,” said she, “when we sat to the table not one o’ ‘em wad say grace, sae I just repeated Burns’s blessin’ a-standin’, while a’ o’ them held up their right han’s. Ye ken the blessin’?—

“‘Some hae meat an’ canna eat;
An’ some wad eat that want it.
But we hae meat an’ we can eat,
An’ sae the Lord be thankit.’

An’ there was one o’ the men I wish ye had seen, — Hugh McGrigor —” Here in her excitement Tibbie fell into “Glasky” full and free. “His mither was neebor tae my mither; an’ we an’ the McGrigors ran thegither whiles we was children. She was a widow woman, an’ had reared four sons, an’ a’ was married an’ set up for themselves but Hugh, an’ he stuck tae his mither and give her his pay every Saturday nicht. She went mendin’, an’ often she gaed out wi’ her griddle a-cookin’ cakies. Oh, oft tae our hoose I’ve heard her tell o’ Hughie’s guidness tae her, never bringin’ a bit o’ a lass to be set over her heid; an’ she’d allays end up wi’, ‘Hughie’s mither’ll be his fortin’ yet.’

“Well, twa years ago Mistress McGrigor cam’ hur-ryin’ to Mistress Calders wi’ a lawyer’s letter. It was to tell the wull of her old cousin Peter Frazer, who had gone to Melbourne when he was just a bit laddie, an’ had never been back to Scotland, though he were always a-comin’. Well, he had died at ninety-two year old, leavin’ a fortin’ o’ one thousand pound to Mistress McGrigor. But,” said Tibbie, “the strangest part o’ the wull was this. Says it, ‘She maun build a cot wi’ part o’ the money by our auld home by the river Clyde whar the salmon rise.’ Noo,” said Tibbie, with wide-open eyes, and speaking slowly, “never, wi’in memory o’ the auldest body we knew, had the salmon rose in the river Clyde. There war no cots then, but just wharfs and quays and ships and blocks o’ houses thick, and the water was that filthy and full o’ pisen that if a man droppet in the Clyde by accident an’ got a mouthful o’ ’t it was his sure death.

“Poor auld body,” continued Tibbie, shaking her head, “an’ he a-thinkin’ for seventy long year may-hap o’ the home cot by the river Clyde whar the salmon rise, an’ it all wipet oot clean off the face o’ the earth. The Lord deliver us frae buildin’ oor eternal hopes on a like false foundation !”

X.

WITH Mary Shannon came Irish songs and stories. For a little time Tibbie's Scotch tales were not called for. There was Mary's visit to her old aunts, Aunt Bridget and Aunt Mitty, who lived in a little stone farm-house all whitewashed like snow, and made lovely by vines of pink roses which ran over the thatched roof and just peeped into the bedroom window, "a-noddin' to ye in the mornin', them roses." And this was only the starting-point for the story of an old donkey that went every morning "to the gentleman's place," dragging a little cart loaded with milk-cans, and accompanied only by a blind dog who, if the gate chanced to be shut, would bark till one of the maids heard him and came to open it. Then there were eggs to be found and counted, and sold at the great house. "Oh, that was a fine house, Douglas dear," said Mary, proudly, "with a winder in it for every day in the year!"

Then there was the sea-wall where Mary used to sit and watch the "white birds flittin' and the sun

dancin' on the waves," while she knit long gray-wool stockings. And the wonderful taste of the potatoes that Aunt Mitty roasted in the ashes on the hearth ! " Oh, that was a taste like none other, Douglas dear ! " And there was a fine merry little cricket in a black jacket — Mary told it as if this special cricket had donned a black jacket to call on her and her aunts, — that lived somewhere in a crack in the hearth, and came out at dusk and piped for them in the firelight.

But the tale that pleased little Elinor most (" Such a pitiful story," she said) was of a little lamb in Aunt Mitty's flock that did not know its mother " after she came up from the shearin', with her beautiful wool all gone. While the shepherd was washin' the sheep in the brook, the little lammie bleated on the shore for its mother ; but when the poor mother wanted to get to her lammie and nurse it, the bit lammie ran away in fear. It went hungry all day, just bleatin' and bleatin' ; but mind ye," — here the children would straighten up and open their eyes wide, — " mind ye, when the dark night came and the lammie could not see the changed look of his mother, but only just heard the kind voice of her, oh ! he knew her voice well, and just fled to her and lay by her, cuddlin', and got his sweet supper and slept all night by her in peace."

"I'm so glad the little lamb knew his mother at last," said little Elinor. "When I go there to your aunts, Mary, I shall pat that little lamb and give him clover and salt. Do you think he will like me?"

Mary was sure he would, and if he had grown, as perhaps he had by this time, big and rough, there would be another little one like him to frisk in the field with her.

Then there were new songs, — new to the children :
"Oh, dear, what can the matter be ;" and

"On the green banks of Shannon, when Sheilah was nigh,
No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I ;"

and

"When Pat came o'er the hill,
He whistled loud and shrill ;"

and

"She milked the dun cow,
That ne'er offered to stir ;
Though cross 't was to others, 't was gentle to her,
My own little Kathleen, my Kathleen O'Moore."

Douglas made me bring from the sacred recesses of the family treasury a tall silver porringer, with the name of an Irish ancestor engraved upon it, — Maurice O'Neil, — the Paul Revere spoons bearing the initials of later generations of O'Neils, with the greenish-golden satin vest and breeches of one of the great-grand-fathers, and a set of silver buckles studded with bril-

liants. Mary looked admiringly at the relics, and Douglas said, "Mary, very likely I am a relative of yours; perhaps my great-great-grandfather has called on your aunts, and seen the donkey and the blind dog."

The ballad of "The Sailor Boy" made a deep impression on Douglas. He suggested learning it to repeat in Sunday-school, the only appropriateness consisting evidently in its "telling about a dead sailor." Here it is just as Mary used to sing it:—

THE SAILOR BOY.

"EARLY, early in the Spring,
My love Willy went to serve the king;
The raging seas and the wind blew high,
Which parted me and my sailor b'y.

"Father, father, make me a boat,
That on the ocean I may float!
And every ship that will pass by,
I will inquire for my sailor b'y."

This lady had not gone far,
Until she met with a man-of-war,
Saying, "Captain, captain, tell me true,
If my love Willy's on board of you."

"What color of clothes does your Willy wear?
And what's the color of your sailor's hair?"
"His hair was light and his jacket blue;
It's easily known that his heart was true."

"I fear, great lady, your Willy is gone ;
I fear, great lady, your sailor is drowned.
From yon green island as we passed by
We lost nine more and your sailor b'y."

She wrung her hands and tore her hair,
Like one distracted in despair,
Saying, " How can I live when my Willy 's gone ?
How can I live with my sailor drowned? "

She threw her boat against the rocks,
Saying, " Captain, captain, dress in black,
And, all you sailors, come do the same,
From the cabin back to the mainmast high.
Come mourn with me for my sailor b'y ;
Come mourn with me for my sailor b'y ;
Come mourn with me for my sailor b'y."

XI.

THE town where Allan was born was to have a centennial celebration, and we decided to attend it. Then came an invitation to Allan to make an address on the second day of the festivities. Of course I wanted to hear that, even after he had read it through to me six times. I wanted to see how other people would look when he read it to them.

Allan's immediate family had gone from the town years before, but he still had a few distant relatives there. Madam Granger was his great-aunt, and the Morris family were his second cousins.

We meant to stay at the hotel and have a free, pleasant time by ourselves, but when I received a note from Miss Theresa Morris, who lived with Madam Granger, saying that her aunt wanted to receive Allan and me as her guests, we were very glad to accept the invitation. She bid Miss Morris say that she was very anxious to see me ; she had heard such agreeable accounts of Allan's wife. This *was* pleasant, for the poor old lady had seen me only a few years before,

when Allan and I were her guests for a day or two, — and now she had forgotten all about it !

Madam Granger lived in a beautiful old place, with a splendid park and a smooth lawn, which stretched down to a lake, wide and beautiful, with one side thickly wooded, while on the other side, as far as you could see, were green fields dotted with lovely homes. That lake was famed in history and romance, and haunted by spirits brave and bold. When you called them they would answer, loud and merrily as Robin Hood ; but they fled as they answered, for the last sound was but a whispered echo.

The old lady of the mansion lived in a spacious room on the first floor looking toward the lake. She constantly inhabited that room and the parlor adjoining it. Old Madam Fortesque I always thought of, as she sat straight up in her chair in a black silk gown, and with a white lace cap with long tabs over her shoulders. Though she was so old, her head was very clear, and she had a soft pink lingering in her cheeks, and her hair waved in little natural curls round her forehead.

I remember the first time I saw her, as she sat in her Summer parlor, erect and stately to receive me, in her lap a big white ostrich-feather fan ; and that Miss Agatha Morris, a niece who then lived with her, after we had eaten a dainty little lunch with “ Madam

Aunt," as she called her, showed me over the house, and I saw the beautiful old china cups from which Washington and Lafayette had drunk, and the old-fashioned cut glass, and the dark parlors with furniture all in linen covers. When the maid opened the shutters to show me Madam Granger's portrait at seventeen, it made the room look drearier than before, — this sudden stream of sunlight. It was strange to look at this beauty standing life-size in all the bravery of youth, with blue sky behind her and a Spring landscape, and she in white, and then to cross the chill, wide hall, with its dark old portraits, and see the same woman old, stately (eighty-five then), sitting in an easy-chair with a cane at hand, — and to believe that they could be the same.

In looking at such a marvellous change in this short life, it does not appear so strange a thing that these souls of ours shall some day possess other bodies, their own, and yet celestial, — for in that glorious change we shall pass into the beauty of immortal youth.

Allan and I were sitting in the study together one evening. "Oh, dear," said I, "I do want to go to Moorlands, but I don't want to go and feel uneasy about the children. I'd rather stay at home than do that. Oh, for a woman relative, a maiden aunt, an unmarried sister!"

“Why don’t you send for May?” asked Allan. “She’s coming here soon for a visit, anyway, and she’d let you off for two days, I know. She was n’t born in that town, and won’t care to go herself.”

“Oh, what a lovely thought!” said I. “I’ll write to her this minute; and if she will come now I’ll get everything planned so that the house will run itself for those days. Mary is so good with the children, and Tibbie will attend to everything downstairs.”

I sat down to write a letter to my husband’s sister May, who was visiting her sister, Mrs. Weston, in Northfield. She came once a year from Delaware, and I knew she’d help me out if she could.

In a few days her answer came. She would gladly come, she said; but she would have to bring her Willy with her, and Gracie Weston would have to come too to show her the way, for she always got bewildered in New York.

This was delightful. If Gracie came, May would not be lonely; but how about the night in this big country house? My relatives might be timid, though I had written that Scott was an able defender. Why not write to my brother Maurice? He’d come out to oblige me, I knew, for one night. So I wrote to him, and he replied that he would come; that he was glad it was Wednesday night, for he had promised Tom

(another brother of mine) to stay with his family while he was in St. Louis ; and that Tom was not to be home till Wednesday night.

“ Oh ! ” I said to Allan that night, “ there is nothing that cannot be arranged, if people will only take hold of things in the right time and place. I hate that talk of being ruled by circumstances. How beautifully everything is working ! My new bonnet came home too ; and it is a beauty.”

That night Mary came upstairs to say that her sister in the city was very ill, and they had sent for her to take care of her.

“ I ’ll have to go,” she said. “ I ’m very sorry, but I ’ll go and get that young American girl, Miranda, who is going to leave Mrs. Thompson to-morrow, and I ’ll stay and show her about everything to-morrow morning.”

“ Never mind, Molly, don’t get down-hearted ; you shall go,” said Allan. “ May and Grace can put the children to bed and see that they are dressed, for one day, and the new girl can make beds and manage for two days surely.”

Miranda came ; and the next morning began the day when my sister-in-law was to come. On that morning, at gray dawn, came Miranda to my door, to say that Tibbie was very sick and could n’t get

up. I hurried to her room. She looked white and suffering.

"Why, Tibbie, what is the matter?" I cried.

"Oh, nothing," said Tibbie, "but that I've an awfu' pain in my side, and a beatin' sair heid. Oh, I don't know what ails me!"

"Did you feel sick yesterday, Tibbie?"

"Well, I did i' th' afternoon."

"How do you feel sick?"

"Well, for one thing, blood has been pourin' frae my mouth."

I saw that she was very sick and sent for a doctor. When he came he asked Tibbie countless questions, and found out nothing as to the cause of her illness, but left her something that he hoped would relieve her. After he had been gone some time, she sent for me to tell me that she had just thought that perhaps the falling downstairs "had something to do wi' it." It seemed that she had fallen down the kitchen stairs the day before, during my absence in the city. This was the first I had heard of it.

She said that Miranda had not been two minutes in the house before she knew we might as well have dressed up a broomstick and stood it in the corner and saved our money; that after I was gone she tried

to hurry her up and she only replied, "I was never born to kill myself workin'."

"An' I was that mad," said Tibbie, "that I seized the chair I wanted her to carry downstairs, and a lamp and a pitcher, and I flew down the back stairs and just tumbled and stuck the leg o' the chair into my side, an' rolled over an' bumpet my heid on the iron leg o' the mangle."

"Oh, Tibbie," I cried, "of course it was the fall that hurt you. Why did n't you tell the doctor about it?"

"I just never thought o' it."

The doctor looked grave when I told him of Tibbie's accident. He said she must lie still certainly for a week.

Good-by, centennial !

That afternoon the three guests arrived, and being relatives, they soon heard of our condition and at once offered to "help out."

"Why, you shall not stay at home ; can't you send for a woman for the day? It's only one night you are to be gone ; and surely Miranda can manage to do the rest, and Grace and I will take care of Douglas and Elinor," said Auntie May.

So I began to think I might go to the "centennial" after all.

"If Tibbie is in bed no one will remember to lock the outside cellar door," said Allan. "You must tell May to see to it."

"Oh, I know what I'll do," said I. "I'll write out a paper for Miranda, to tell her just what she must do about locking up at night; and then I'll write a list for Maurice so that he can see that she does all these things. I think May has enough to do without keeping blinds and cellar doors on her mind."

Miranda's list was as follows :—

"Lock cellar door and shake it to see that it is fast.

"Draw in the blinds.

"See that three fastenings are locked on every window.

"Lock two inside kitchen doors.

"Lock back-stairs door.

"Bolt front and back hall doors and lock with key.

"Take pitcher of water and a tumbler to each room at nine o'clock.

"Set a pitcher of hot water at each bedroom door at seven o'clock in the morning, and knock.

"See that the night-lamp is not turned too high or too low.

"Put silver in Mr. Maurice's closet.

"Put two chairs at the head of the front stairs, fastened together and tied to the banisters [this was to keep Scott upstairs with the family] with the red braid in the black table-drawer, — the little top-drawer."

Then I wrote for Maurice : —

“DEAR MAURICE, — Miranda is new, — that is, she is new to me, — and does n’t know the ways of the house. I have written out a list for her. I wish you would see that she follows my instructions.”

Then followed my instructions in this wise : —

“See that front and back hall doors have been locked and bolted.

“Ask Miranda if she has taken a pitcher of cold water and a tumbler to each room at night, etc.”

The next morning I awoke with a start. It was very light, and alas ! it was very late. I could not hear a sound about the house, so I hurried on my wrapper and went to the servants’ room. Miranda was still in bed.

“Why, Miranda, what’s the matter with you?” I asked.

“Oh !” she groaned, “I’ve such a sick headache that I can’t stand up. I’ve tried twice, and I am so dizzy I can’t see.”

I turned and saw Tibbie putting on her stockings. I had to order her back to bed. I’d rather have Tibbie though sick than a dozen Mirandas in good health. I went back to my room.

“Come, Mr. Allan,” I said, “you must flee down

and make a kitchen fire while I dress Elinor and myself."

I sent Douglas for Maggie Wylie, and had breakfast half ready by the time she arrived. This looked encouraging for the "centennial." Three guests, two servants sick !

Allan said he would wait till morning for me ; so we rose betimes to get things in order for the day. I telegraphed to my brother that I had decided to go to Moorlands only for one day, and so he need not come out for a night as he had promised.

Maggie Wylie was on hand again to get breakfast and attend to the kitchen generally. I had engaged a nurse in the neighborhood to stay for the day too (for Miranda was only crawling about like a fly on a mild day in March) and attend to Tibbie, who had to have medicine and hot poultices every hour.

After breakfast little Douglas called me into the hall. "Mamma," said he, "I have a bad pain in my stomach. You won't go away and leave me with a pain in my stomach, will you, mamma?" He put his arms round my neck.

"No, my dearie," said I ; "but you'll be all well after I give you a little hot peppermint." But he was n't.

As it came on toward ten o'clock, I told Allan I

was so tired that I felt as if I'd just returned from assisting at the original settlement of Jamestown, and that he would have to go alone. He saw that the thing was settled, so off he went.

About five minutes after I had seen him go down the street, I heard his voice in the dining-room. I flew downstairs; he had a pair of driving gloves on, and was tinkering at the stove.

"Miranda ran after me to say that one side of the stove was falling down," he said. It appeared that she had tried to put coal in through an ornamental door instead of the one with hinges and a handle. One look at his watch, and off flew Allan. And thus it was that I failed to attend the centennial celebration of the town where my husband was born.

Later I found Tibbie on her knees in the kitchen clearing out the stove oven. She said she had meant to get at it for several days, and now that we had extra help in the house she thought the time had come. In an hour from that time we had to send for the doctor again, and she was sick in bed for a month.

On Friday I got a note from my brother Maurice. He said that when the town where Allan was born had its second "centennial," he hoped we would go, if at all, without planning for it beforehand.

He continued : —

"After getting your telegram that you did not want me on Wednesday night, I heard at Tom's store that he was not expected back till Thursday night. I knew they would be glad to have me at the house, though I could not go early. But after I had been to the Marshalls' to dine, and then to a concert with Kitty Marshall, I went uptown. I got in with my latch-key and crept upstairs softly, as I found the house wrapped in slumber, — or its inmates, rather. When I reached my room and lighted the gas, there was Tom in my bed, my single bed.

"We had a laugh when I punched him awake, and he left the bed to me and went downstairs. It seems he had only got in about an hour before, and knowing he was unexpected, had crept up to the hall room to avoid waking the children.

"When he reached the door of his own room, he softly turned the knob. The door was locked. He was afraid to make a noise for fear of waking and frightening the baby, so he dressed himself and lay on the parlor sofa all night, with a camel's hair shawl and a fur rug for covering.

"In the morning he frightened one of the maids almost out of her wits, as she turned and saw him asleep after opening the parlor blinds; and she shrieked and flew upstairs. The shriek waked Tom, who appeared, wrapped in his shawl like Sitting Bull or a Roman senator, and explained things to the surprised family. Tom sends love, and hopes your next family tidal wave won't reach as far as his house."

Allan came home on Thursday. Madam Granger had been so touched by my husband's account of my

disappointment that she sent me by express a Wedgwood pitcher over a hundred years old, of cream color, with dull red flowers on it, and also two tall silver candlesticks and the snuffer and tray. Tom thinks these gifts ought to belong to him; but I surely needed some recompense for being amiable under such trying circumstances.

XII.

BEYOND the fields on which our windows look out is a fine mansion-house, of which we only get peeps through the thick foliage. We call it "Major Lovejoy's place," but Douglas calls it "Jerry's house." Jerry works for the major. Though Douglas must know better, he seems to think that his friend Jerry, whom he has known and admired ever since Elinor was a mere baby, owns the major, the house, the horses, and the whole estate. Jerry is his dear friend. Douglas used to walk up the road and talk over the fence with him as he worked, and thus the friendship ripened. If his heart is as fair as his face, I thought, he may well be trusted with my boy. He is sunburnt, of course ; but you see that his forehead is white when he raises his cap to you. His hair curls all over his head, and his teeth are white and even. He has the most charming of all brogues, — a Tipperary brogue with a "whir" and a roll.

One day, early in the acquaintance, I walked up the road and had a little talk with Jerry. I told him how

much Douglas liked him and wished to be with him, and asked if I might trust my boy to him without fear of his learning anything that would grieve me.

“’Deed, ma’am,” said Jerry, earnestly, “ye may trust him wid me ; I’ll guard him like a mother.”

What a proud boy Douglas was when he got on the wagon, and with Jerry drove jolting to the lower field ! There he would stand in the wagon, holding the reins, while the vegetables were loaded in. I’ve seen him sit at one side of the field for an hour, watching Jerry’s cow, — he who could n’t sit still for ten minutes to learn a lesson. I sympathize with him. It is pleasanter to sit on a fence in the Summer sunshine and watch a friendly cow nibble the sweet grass, while the birds sing and the butterflies flit through the air, than to stay in a room studying the multiplication-table.

Douglas never failed to be at the barn at milking-time, for Jerry always sang as he milked. I told him to ask Jerry to write down his milking-song for me ; and so he did, with a lead pencil on a shingle : —

“ Oh, Granny Gray, let down your milk !
Your horns are gold, your tail is silk ;
Oh, Granny Gray, let down your milk,
And don’t be boddering me ! ”

It *was* a nice little song. I liked it too.

One day Douglas brought home a fine tale, — he and Jerry had been hunting !

“ Hunting what ? ”

“ A skunk ! ”

“ How did you hunt it ? ”

“ Oh, we took Jerry’s dog Rover, and ran all round the outside of the barn ; and Rover got so excited, and barked and smelt in every hole under the barn and sneezed, and would not go into the hole, no matter how much we ‘sicked’ him, ’cause he knew there was a skunk there ! Wasn’t he a wise dog ? I wouldn’t go into a hole to let a skunk catch me, would you, mother ? And, mother,” he went on, “ Jerry and a boy that’s working on the place to-day, to help Jerry, had a shooting-match. I tell you Jerry is a splendid shot. He beat that boy all hollow.”

“ Mercy, Douglas ! how distressed I should have been if I had known there was any shooting there ! ”

“ Oh, mother dear, Jerry called me the ‘ empire ’ to see which beat ; and he set me on top of the chicken-house before he began — way off behind them.”

“ Well, what did they shoot, — skunks or sparrows ? ”

“ Oh, neither. They just put some old tomato-cans up on a post and fired at them. That boy could n’t

hit at all, but Jerry sent the can flying every time. I bet — I mean I think Jerry would make a splendid soldier ; he's such a good shot and so brave ! He says he'd just as lief walk from here to Greenland, in the middle of the night, all alone."

This dog Rover, who had shown so much discretion in the "hunt," was a big Newfoundland. Besides being a friend of Jerry and of Douglas, he was a very dear and intimate friend of the cow. When she was taken for the day into the lower field for pasture, Rover was worried and uneasy, and every little while would go to the barn and peer anxiously in ; but when she returned at night it was wonderful to see the joyful meeting of the two friends. Cows are generally very much afraid of dogs when they have calves, but when "Jinny's" calf arrived she showed no fear of Rover. She let him come freely about her and her precious calf, and would lick first one and then the other.

Jerry's new horses were the finest in the world, Douglas thought, and as for Jerry's uncle, Douglas looked on him with a sort of admiring awe. He looked like a funny Irish Neptune with a trident, as he sat in the back of the cart with a pitchfork in his hands. In reality he was a kind little old man who lived with Jerry at Major Lovejoy's, and helped him on the farm ; but to Douglas he was the rich "uncle

from India," for Jerry had told him that his uncle paid his passage out for him when he was a lad.

One day when Douglas had been describing with deep respect the wealth of Jerry's uncle and his kindness to Jerry, as evidenced that day by digging potatoes, I said, —

"What is his business? He can't have any if he works with Jerry all the time."

"Oh, he only comes to help in the busy season."

"What is his business when he is at home?"

"Well," said little Douglas, screwing up his forehead, "I don't really *know*; but I think — yes, I'm sure — that he is a broker."

"Oh, it rains so," said little Douglas one day, "what can I do! I'd go on working on the tea-kettle holder, only I broke my worsted needle yesterday."

"I have n't another that will carry that thick worsted," I said. "Go and work with your tools."

A few minutes afterward Douglas appeared at my chamber door, in rubber boots and overcoat, with a wet umbrella in his hand. "I got one," he said, holding up a big darning-needle in triumph. "Tibbie's would n't hold the worsted, and Mary had only fine ones; and I remembered and dashed on my boots and ran up the road to the field where Jerry's uncle

is working, — he does n't mind rain, — and he was just singing his old song about

‘ Oh, give me me wattle,
Me work is nigh done.’ ”

“ He does n't darn his stockings in the field, in the rain, does he ? ” I asked. “ I know few brokers do.”

“ Oh, mother ! No ; but he carried a big needle stuck inside his coat to take splinters out of his fingers the days they were mending the fence along Jerry's land, and I just thought of it and borrowed it of him. He was very polite. I told him if I lost it I'd buy him another ; and would n't it be nice, when the tea-kettle holder is done, to give it to him, because he was so kind to lend me this ? ”

There came a time not long after this when another side of Jerry's character was revealed, and he showed himself able to serve his little friend in other ways than in directing hunts and shooting-matches.

One morning, during the time when the children were sick with scarlet fever, Jerry called, as he had often done before, to inquire for Douglas and Elinor. I happened to be in the kitchen when he came in.

“ 'Deed, Mrs. Burroughs,” said he, “ you're looking quite low yourself, ma'am.”

“ I am worn out, Jerry,” said I, “ taking care of

your friend. Douglas has taken such a dislike to the nurse that he can't even drink water she has brought to him; and while he is sick he has to be quieted and given his own way."

"An' do ye take all the care o' him day an' night," asked Jerry, "an' look after the little girrl too?"

"Yes, of course. Mr. Burroughs and I divide the nights. We don't dare to trust the nurse alone."

"Dear me! Dear me!" said Jerry. "An' can't Tibbie give ye a lift, or Carl?"

"No, they are busy all the time, and we can't get any one to come and help now; everybody is afraid of the fever."

"I'm not afraid o' it," said Jerry, "an' I've a room o' me own over the stable where nobody need come with me, an' the major an' his family is away for two months; so I'll just come down for a bit o' the night to relieve ye, if Douglas would put up wid me, and ye could get a wink o' slape at the same time."

Sleep, sleep! oh, that was what I longed for! It was a constant struggle to keep my eyes open.

"May I go up an' look at the b'y now?" asked Jerry.

Douglas had just waked from uneasy slumbers and was tossing about the bed when we went in. A smile broke over his face.

"Oh, Jerry," he said, — "oh, Jerry, are you coming to visit me?"

"Not now," said Jerry; "but if ye'll be a good b'y the day, I'll come in an' walk wid ye to-night. I'll walk ye up an' down a-singin' soft in your ear. How will ye like that?"

"I'd like that, Jerry; and I'd let you give me my medicine too, besides carrying me," said Douglas, who had come to think it a favor to others to wait upon him.

"'Deed, will ye?" said Jerry, accepting the offer in the spirit in which it was made. "Well, I'll be gettin' proud as a paycock when I see meself puttin' the pills down yer neck. Good-by, now; I'll be round about half-past eight o'clock."

Up and down the long nursery I could hear Jerry's firm tread. I knew little Douglas was just as I had left him, snuggled up in his arms, warm and safe and happy. I could catch now and then the refrain of his low song, —

"The ful' o' the house o' Irish love
Is Mary Ann Malone."

Elinor was sleeping sweetly, and her father was watching her. I fell asleep with an easier heart than

I had had for many a day. After a while I woke, and now the words of the song ran, —

“He boddered and tazed me,
Yet somehow he plazed me,
That thrubblesome Barney O’Haye.”

I could not hear the even step as before, so I slipped quietly into the nursery. Jerry motioned me away. He had put Douglas in his bed, and was now sitting singing softly by his side.

“I’ll call ye at the time for the physic,” he said; “till then slape sound.”

I crept back — oh, so gladly! — to bed, and slept for another hour, as I supposed. Then Jerry roused me by tapping at the door.

“Ye said,” said Jerry, “ye never roused him to give him his physic; an’ as he slep’ on, I let ye sleep on likewise.”

“What, Jerry, have I slept the whole night? Is it morning?”

“It is half-past four o’clock. Good-by to ye, ma’am. I’ll be back to-night; I’m goin’ to me bed now for a nap, an’ then I’ll be all in order for the day.”

After a week or two Douglas began to improve rapidly. He could sit up in bed in his little blue-and-gray wrapper, and look over the pictures in “Harper’s Weekly,” and cut figures from paper

with his round-pointed scissors. Still Jerry insisted on coming, and how gladly I allowed it, I cannot tell. My ministering angel was named Jerry Phelan, — a ministering angel with a rich Irish brogue rolling out through smiles and white teeth.

In one of George McDonald's stories he tells of, a timid little orphan who was forced by cruel persons she lived with to sleep in a lonely garret where rats abounded. The child heard them running and jumping about, and lay in an agony of terror. In her fear she called upon God for help. The door creaked, and an angel appeared, — in the form of a cat; the rats ran away, and she slept in peace, with her furry angel lying beside her. I always liked that little story. I only wished that Jerry had a twin angel to care equally well for Elinor.

Elinor had her antics too. She would n't take a pill till one had first been offered to the engraving of Sir Walter Scott which hung in her room. Simple as we felt in doing it, this ceremony had to be gone through with every time we gave her her medicine. I had to make a night-gown, too, for a woolly white lamb that she hugged day and night, — "Elinor's little lamb," she always called it. We always had to sing, "*Elinor* had a little lamb," or she at once wailed aloud, believing that some unknown Mary had appropriated her

beloved lamb. How sharply the black, shiny, shoe-button eyes of that woolly lamb used to stare at me from the cradle in the night-watches ! “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” they seemed to say.

All day, Douglas cut papers and painted the pictures in illustrated periodicals. We had piles of “Harper’s Weeklies” in the attic,—an accumulation of twelve years. Douglas and Elinor had looked them through for years ; but they were always fresh. I don’t see how I could have got through that Winter without them.

Jerry was lost in amazement at the productions of Douglas’s paints and scissors. He went away every day laden with brown-paper donkeys, and goats, and birds of Paradise with long fringed tails. Every night he was welcomed with joy in Douglas’s room, after he had taken a comfortable lunch in the kitchen.

“’Deed, Mrs. Burroughs,” said Jerry to me one night, “I thought I’d just bust for fear o’ laughin’ last night. Douglas told me a fine tale of what a catcher he was in base-ball ; and he said the first thing he was going to buy when he riz up, was a base-ball mask and a stummick protector,—an’ him lyin’ in the bed, so little and so white ! But he has a fine large sowl in him, ma’am ; days when he comes to see me, he sits on the fence and talks o’

base-ball, an' rolls up his sleeves to show me uncle and me his muscle. Me uncle has always to turn away and blow his nose like an old fish-horn, to kape the laugh in him. Me uncle is quite took up with him too, for while the other b'ys about calls him 'owld man' an' 'Daddy Phelan,' Douglas calls him 'Mr. Phelan,' an' has promised to give him a tay-kittle howlder that he is a-workin' for him. One time he was a-tellin' us about the wars o' England an' Scotland, an' about Robin Hood, an' he sung us a fine song about Robin Hood an' his silver horn. Whin me uncle heard he was sick, says he, 'I've been a-lookin' for it; that's the sort that dies young. His mind is too big for his body,' says he. Now, whin I told him the b'y was gittin' better, says he, 'Thin he's to be spared to be one o' the great min o' the world.' Says he, 'I knew a man whin he was a bit o' a b'y, who come to be an alderman o' New York City; an' Douglas is a finer lad now nor he was!' "

During this siege of scarlet fever I had an odd specimen of a nurse from Vermont, — the nurse whom Douglas so disliked. Like Tibbie's, her friends were the most important people in the world. Jonestown was the centre of the universe to Miss Dibbals, as his home was to the old Scotchman who said, "Paris is a varra fine town to them as canna bide in Peebles."

Her knowledge of New York was gained from a visit to the metropolis when she came down to the hospital to have an operation performed upon one of her eyes. She had lost the sight of this eye and wore spectacles, with one dark-blue glass and one empty frame through which a sharp little blue eye gleamed. Her figure was gaunt, and her hair scant and sandy-colored. She had "a voice" too, — a queer, cracked voice full of quavers and wavers; and as she always "pitched her tune" on her highest note, the high notes of the song were only a shrill squeak. I used to wonder how the baby could go to sleep to her lullaby of, —

"Oh, come my pardner in distress,
My comfort in the wilderness;
Oh, come! oh, come with me, •
Where pleasures never die-e-e-e!"

Perhaps the baby went to sleep to get rid of it.

Miss Dibbals had a great deal to say about the hospital and her feelings when she first arrived and was shown into a room where she waited for fifteen minutes, while a black child with weak eyes and two cross-eyed white children stood in a row and stared at her in silence. I derived from her also varied information about the "octave nerve" and the "Irish of the eye."

She used to speak with pride of being an intimate friend of a certain Mrs. Jones of Jonestown, whose daughter had married a rich German gentleman who drove his horses "tantrum," and who chose to live in America (in Hoboken, I believe), though he owned the handsomest place in Germany, — as if Germany were only another Jonestown. This German gentleman owned a brewery; but he brewed a kind of beer that did n't make people drunk. He seemed a most estimable person.

Shut in as we were for the time, and forced to be close companions, it rather amused me to draw her out upon the subject of Mrs. Jones and her other Jonestown friends. "Mrs. Jones is one of the Jones's," she said.

She had another friend, Mrs. Talbot, who had just money enough to live on if she saved every possible cent and dyed her shawl, dresses, and feathers, and whose skill in this art and mystery was so great that she was still able to be richly and fashionably attired. Mrs. Talbot had a son, Wesley, who was big and strong, but underwitted. Still, he could work at cutting wood or drawing sand and the like. Once Mrs. Talbot had an invitation to go to Rutland to the cattle-show, and for weeks she exerted herself to get up a suitable wardrobe. She dyed a gray shawl a beautiful

magenta, and some white ribbon the very same shade for her bonnet, and mended everything and put new braid on her dresses ; and her sister-in-law, who lived in the other part of the house, pressed the shawl till it looked like new, and knit her some edging for her collar, so that altogether her wardrobe was a success.

The money for the journey had been earned by Wesley by a week's work at Mr. Giles's wood-pile, the only trouble being that Mr. Giles was "slow pay." Still, as Wesley knew that he must bring home that three dollars and a half on Wednesday night if he wanted five cents for peanuts, it was believed that he would dun Mr. Giles at short intervals all day.

What was Mrs. Talbot's horror when Wesley came rushing into the house on his return from work, beaming with joy and excitement, to show her a Waterbury watch which Mr. Giles had given him in payment for his work. She told him he should have no five cents for peanuts ; but he only paused long enough in winding up his watch to slap his pocket, which was resonant with peanut-shells. He had confided all his affairs to Mr. Giles, who had given him five cents to boot. "There was nothin' to be done," said Miss Dibbals, "but jest to unpack and stay to home. She could n't raise three dollars and a half that night."

"Why did n't her sister-in-law lend it to her?" I

asked. It seemed to me I could n't have her lose that visit.

"Why, she was jest as hard up as Maria Talbot was, — plenty to eat but very little ready money ; and besides, she *had* lent her two dollars that she 'd laid by for Spring," rejoined Miss Dibbals, rather tartly, as if I had insinuated that the sister-in-law was stingy.

"She felt awful about it," continued Miss Dibbals. "She said she could hardly stand it to see Wesley set all evenin' windin' and windin' and windin' that watch and crackin' and crackin' on them nuts ; she had worked so hard to get ready, and she had n't been away out of town for twelve years. 'This place she was goin' to visit in Rutland was where a cousin of hers lived that colored photographs and had jest got married to a man that kep' a boardin'-house there ; and she was expectin' a real lively time, for the folks that had side-shows boarded to this house, and always give 'em free tickets, and it was right across the street from the show-grounds. But she jest had to unpack and stay to home."

"But why in the world did n't she take the watch back and make the man give her the money?"

"She might 'a' done that, only she was too quick-spoken and told Wesley that she was goin' to, and he went out and hid it in the barn."

Another night she told me about Mrs. Talbot's sister-in-law and brother-in-law, — a bachelor and an old maid who lived in the other half of the house. Everybody called him "Uncle William" and her "Friend Frances." I asked if they were Quakers, since she was called Friend Frances; but Miss Dibbals said no, they'd always been Methodists, and she was called Friend Frances just because folks wanted to call her that, which I thought was the pleasantest reason that could have been given.

Uncle William and Friend Frances had once been so well off that they were able to "take papers;" and at that same time a nephew in New Bedford was in easy circumstances too and sent them "Harper's Weekly," so that with their "Christian Union" and the Jonestown "Herald," they had all the literature they could digest. These pleasant times went on for several years, while the piles of carefully preserved papers grew higher and higher; but in these "hard times" they cheerfully returned to the old piles, and now, Miss Dibbals said, for about five years they had reread their old stock "Winters."

Uncle William was feeble and could only do a little work about the farm. Friend Frances bought the sugar and coffee and "store findin's" out of her pittance and did the housework. They could not afford

to keep even a boy to help them ; but they were so hospitable that any one of their acquaintance might find a home in their house without warning. Miss Dibbals herself, who was distantly connected with them through her stepmother, used to stay there months at a time when she was n't "out."

From all Miss Dibbals told me, I can see as plainly as if I were there myself, on the visit I long to make to them, the large old kitchen where Uncle William sits on Winter evenings by the fire, smoking his pipe, while Friend Frances clears away the tea dishes. When this is done he takes down his violin, and as soon as he begins to play, the old gray cat jumps upon his shoulder and sits there quietly until he touches certain plaintive notes that jar on Tilly's nerves ; then she stretches out her paw and claws the strings with a prolonged "ow-w-w." Through the "Arkansas Traveller," or any merry tune, Tilly sits unmoved. She has no sense of humor ; cats rarely have after their first youth.

There was an old resident of Jonestown, a worthless fellow, who drank more than was good for him, and often put up for the Winter in the poorhouse. Occasionally he made himself Uncle William's guest ; and he was never sent away, though he stayed for weeks. The violin was a great attraction to this old vagabond.

He could play well, and he would lay the instrument against his rough old cheek and play and play, while Uncle William listened and smoked. Friend Frances used to get tired and slip away to bed. Whenever she saw the old fellow coming down the lane, she would run first to her brother and beg him not to bring the violin out unless John asked for it, for after getting his hand on it it seemed as if he could not lay it down.

Uncle William was so fond of animals too, Miss Dibbals told us, that he made friends with every living thing. The squirrels from the woods behind the barn came down freely and fed with the chickens. Uncle William owned the woods and would never allow a gun to be fired in them. There was a sun-dial by the back door, and a milk-house built over a spring, and behind the house ran a river where they had a row-boat. Uncle William often roved the woods or rowed up the river to the "Far Meadows" to get wild flowers, for he knew where to find every sort that grew in town. Miss Dibbals said the Episcopal minister used often to go with him for flowers. "He pressed 'em," she added with a smile of pitying contempt, as one might speak of a clergyman who made a collection of buttons.

After Miss Dibbals left the hospital, she took the opportunity to visit some of the Jonestown folk, who

had been forced by untoward circumstances to move from that enchanting spot to New York City.

A young man who was a letter-carrier in New York had returned, most naturally, to Jonestown to get a wife, "for he could n't tell who he was gettin' if he married in New York," Miss Dibbals said. "He married Luella Eels. Luella was a real capable girl, and was n't goin' to be a burden to him, so when they returned to the city to live she looked round to see how she could help, and finally she decided to keep a paper and cheap book stand, — a real nice little place like a room, with just a window open in front to sell out of.

"She had quite a chance to read between customers ; and she used to tell me and her husband real interestin' stories, nights, that she 'd read. There was one real excitin' one in the New York 'Weekly,' about a Mr. Atherton, who ran away from his wife when they had n't been long married ; and years afterward he met her and did n't know her, and offered himself to her, and she married him and then told him that she had been married to him before."

"And he never had a suspicion that he had seen her before?" I asked.

"Oh, no ; because she had changed her name and wore a light curly wig."

"What stuff they do make up!" said I. "It could n't be so."

"Well, it *was* so," said Miss Dibbals, "for I bought the paper it was in to send to Jonestown. It give the man's name, Reginald Atherton. And it give the street and number in New York City where he lived, and said she boarded at the Fletcher House in Canal Street. We passed that way one day to see if it was there; and, sure enough, there was 'Fletcher House' on the sign. Why, they would n't *dare* to give ages, names, streets, number, and all, if it was n't so."

I said no more.

She knew a photographer in New York, — Mr. Weeks, — a Jonestown man. She told me once that no fortune-teller could get round her, for Mr. Weeks knew a photographer away uptown in Eighth Avenue, whose wife was called "Madame Susette" and made lots of money as a fortune-teller. "You see, the way was," said Miss Dibbals, "the man would photograph people on paper, and not put on some sort of acid that fetches the picture out. Mr. Weeks said it looked like a plain piece of paper. Then when a man come to get his fortune told, she'd tell him a lot of stuff, and then offer to show him his girl's picture. She'd lay one of these papers into a saucer

that she said had nothin' but water in it, but it had this stuff her husband had fixed ; and the first thing he 'd know, he 'd see a girl's face lookin' out of the saucer at him. Mr. Weeks said he 'd been introduced to this man's wife once in the gallery ; so he thought he 'd go to Madame Susette and see if it was true what he 'd heard about her. When he went in he says, ' How d' ye do ? ' but she made out she did n't know him, and showed him one o' these girls' heads ; and when he said he guessed that must be his second wife, and asked her who took the photograph, she looked real mad ; and the next time her husband saw Mr. Weeks he would n't even speak to him."

XIII.

NOW, who do you suppose entered our gate? The little god of love himself! He came to the kitchen door and asked for Tibbie. He came disguised, the goose, as if we would n't know him, —

“Having once met him, one does n't forget him.”

He was disguised first, as Rabby Brown, sailor; but the second time he asked for Tibbie, he gave the name of Peter McFarlane, baker.

Rabby was a big sunburnt sailor, who looked as if nothing could stir him from his settled calm. I could hear Tibbie's tongue flying when he was there, and occasionally a murmur from him or a low laugh. He came often, for he was just in from India, and was soon to sail for Glasgow. Sometimes he sat silent on the kitchen piazza, while Tibbie busied herself within. When they went out for a little stroll about the yard, Elinor and Douglas always followed behind with the collie-dog behind them. One afternoon, not long before Rabby sailed, Tibbie kept him

for two hours in the cherry-trees picking fruit to preserve; and another day she gave him the lawn-mower "just to roll over the grass," occasionally stepping out to point to a place he had skipped, or to show how to guide the mower round the trees. Finally his ship was to sail, and Tibbie went to see him off.

That night I said to her, "Tibbie, Rabby Brown came here so often while he was on shore that I thought maybe he'd want to marry you before he sailed."

"Weel, he did," admitted Tibbie; "but I tauld him I couldna attend to it noo when the Spring cleanin' had been put off so late, wi' sickness i' th' family, extra blanket-washin', and the kitchen tae be whitened, and carpaets tae be repaired. Sae he said that when I was ready I would know weel that he'd be waitin', ready also. An' noo, hoo about the blankets? Will ye hae the black woman or the German woman to assist me? Ah, could I but tak' them to a stream an' hae the lads to pipe the while, I'd dance on the blankets merrily."

One night "Meester McFarlane" came and asked for me. After Tibbie had shown him into the dining-room, and announced my visitor, she went into the kitchen. I supposed he had come to attend to some

business with me — I had a bill at his shop — before he settled down to courting in the kitchen.

He sat stiff and solemn on the edge of the sofa. After he greeted me, there was a long silence, so I said, "I believe you wanted to see me, Mr. McFarlane; the bill was right, was it not?"

"Yes, Mistress Burroughs," said he; "but I called to discourse wi' ye about Catharine Elizabeth Drummond. I've made her an honorable offer of holy matrimony, an' I canna mak' oot if she's ta'en me or no. I'll no bear triflin' wi'; I'm no lad. One night she is enticin', one night obdurate."

"Perhaps Tibbie does n't know her own mind yet," I said. And with a feeling of general loyalty to my sex, I added, "Tibbie has another lover, I believe; perhaps she has not decided." The man seemed actually to grow rigid, so I hastened to say, "But if she has promised to marry you, she should not trifle with you. Has she promised?"

"Weel, no, I canna say she hae," said Mr. McFarlane, doubtfully. "She has never just committed herself; but she has said that she liket auld men better than lads, an' she asket me once how me affairs stood, an' I told her quite explicit. She told me quite fair, as if we was gettin' things settled, that she was an abstainer, and asket if I was. I confessed that I was no

abstainer and yet no drinker, though on a New Year we had always had a toddy ; so she made me promise to become an abstainer, an' I did. I hear that she is a verra thrifty lass an' would mak' a guid wife, an' she is comely ; but I canna be rinnin' like a doggie at her heels at my age. To-night or never, says I. Perhaps ye 'd ca' her in, ma'am, an' be done wi' it."

"Would it not be better to see her by herself?" I asked.

"No," said "Meester McFarlane," with dignity, "I prefar witnesses to the transaction. I'm na lad" — that seemed a favorite expression whose truth needed no other witness than his well-wigged head — "to be makin' love by the light o' the moon, or trampin' the brae in th' dew. Na, na ; ca' her in."

I had not far to go, — Tibbie was listening at the door ; but I walked across the back hall and the kitchen and summoned her by a beckoning finger. I knew she had heard all.

Tibbie followed me in and sat at the other side of the room, after demurely saying, "Guid-evenin' to you, Meester McFarlane ; I hope ye 're weel."

"I'm quite weel, thank ye, an' hope ye are the same," he replied stiffly.

"Tibbie," I said, "Mr. McFarlane asked to have you called in ; he will tell you what he wishes to say."

"I just called to say, Miss Catharine Elizabeth Drummond, that I made ye an offer o' matrimony this day week, an' I wad like an answer."

Tibbie looked as innocent as a lamb. "Weel, sir," she said, "if a' ye require is an answer, I suppose as long as ye get an *answer*, ye dinna care what it may be."

"Ye ken weel that I care," replied the suitor, doggedly. "The last time I was here, ye made objection to me bein' a baker; but ye suld pick that bone wi' me faither for apprenticin' me to that trade. Ye remarket that ye'd always intended to marry wi' a sailor; but I canna be a sailor a-grippin' wet ropes, nor climbin' up bare poles like a dancin' bear, to pleasure even ye, at my time o' life."

Mr. McFarlane's temper was up a bit; he didn't know Tibbie as well as I did. A firm expression was settling about her mouth, and a glitter was in her eye.

"What settled objection hae ye to a baker?" he continued.

"It always mak's me sick to me stomick," replied Tibbie, "to think o' flour an' water muddled thegither by men-folk. I've heered that they tramps crackers wi' their feet too, — Heaven forbid!"

This was too much for Mr. McFarlane. "Hae ye

nae tasted baker's bread in ye'r life," said he, warmly, "or crackers, lass?"

"Weel, I maun confess I hae," returned Tibbie, in a provokingly calm voice, "when I was a bit o' a lass an' didna ken what I was eatin'; we a' maun eat our peck o' dirt."

"An' hae ye nae eaten baker's bread sin' ye were grown?"

It sounded like a stern controversy between consumer and manufacturer, rather than like a conversation between lover and sweetheart.

"Weel, I hae," admitted Tibbie, "when took wi' the pangs o' hunger, and considerin' what the chosen people eat in th' destruction o' Jerusalem; but I eat it wi' me eyes fixet on the ceilin', an' repeatin' a verse o' Scripture to divert me mind till it were weel gulpet down."

"Sae," said Mr. McFarlane, rising stiffly, "I'll bid ye guid-evenin'."

"But," said Tibbie, — he paused to listen, — "I may nae like a mon's trade an' like the mon. I can, thank Heaven, mak' me ain bread an' bannocks as well as me ain New-Year cake an' parritch. I'm beholden to none for that. I thought ye said ye wanted a body to stan' in your shop behin' your cookies."

"Weel?"

“Weel, I couldna do that. It wad mak’ me wild in me heid to stan wi’ idle han’s like an auld hen, on one leg and thin on the ither, waitin’ for folk to come i’ th’ shop, suitin’ themsel’s in the time.”

“I said that me wife *did* help me in th’ shop, an’ sae she did; an’ she knitted too, the whiles, an’ baket an’ brewed, and let lodgin’s, moreover.”

“I believe ye,” said Tibbie; “she did a’ that, an’ more too, and then, quite wore oot, just stretchet herself oot an’ died.”

“An’ ye wad like to be a married woman, an’ yet sit cocket up in th’ parlor wi’ a glass case o’er ye, quite removet frae the ills o’ life?” said he, in a bitter, sarcastic tone.

“I’d nae sit in *your* parlor,” said Tibbie, with flushed cheeks, “if you’d gie me all the siller i’ th’ warld. I dinna believe ye care for me, but only for the work ye’d get oot o’ me to save ye wi’ a housemaid an’ a clark. Ye’r auld heart is nae mair true nor is ye’r fine heid o’ deceitful hair.”

I thought now it was time for me to leave the room; but I had not gone halfway upstairs, when Mr. McFarlane came out of the dining-room, and began a struggle with the door. I returned to pull the night-latch for him.

“Guid-nicht, Mistress Burroughs,” said he. “I

thank the Lord, wha has enlightened my een an' opened me ears an' delivered me frae the snares of a termagant. In the words o' Solomon, I'd rather dwell in the house-top alane, than wi' a brawlin' woman in a wide hoose. Guid-nicht."

I did not speak to Tibbie of her discarded lover, nor did she refer to him for a week or more. I went into the kitchen one day to give an order, and after that was settled Tibbie began,—

"Did ye hear that Meester McFarlane was married?"

"No ; not to you, Tibbie?"

Tibbie burst out laughing. "Na, not to me, but to a widow wi' a big lad an' a lass. Heaven was quite considerate to him, he 'll be thinkin', providin' him wi' a errant-boy an' a clark an' a wife a' in one whip. He was too canny for me. I'd far sooner hae Rabby Brown an' only his sailor's pay than an auld carle like Meester McFarlane. I made a' my gibes about the trade just tae fret Meester McFarlane, but 't war nae the shop nor the trade that I objected tae, but just tae Meester McFarlane himsel'. I wish Rabby Brown had that fine shop," she added with a sigh, "and Meester McFarlane a-shinnin' up the mast, I'd nae object to gie a helpin' hand then, i' the shop. I hae been alternatin' the twa o' them in my mind,"

she continued, "for some time, an' I think I'll hae Rabby noo. If I'd married Meester McFarlane I'd hae been naught but Meestress McFarlane, for he's the mulishest-headedest Scotchman! but if I marry Rab I'll be Tibbie Drummond the same, wi' just Brown tacket on. I'd nae be wearyin' did he mean this thing or the ither thing, for I ken Rabby through an' through, an' he kens me as weel. If he wants me, he aye kens what he's gettin'; he's seen me merry an' sad an' mad. I'm aye tae him like a gown that'll nae fade i' th' sun or fray i' th' wearin' or shrink i' th' washin'; he's aye content wi' me. But I'm nae quite settled in me mind about marryin' at a'; it's a lottery, a lottery."

The first year Tibbie was with us, I did not feel strong, and was eating only the simplest of foods.

"Ye must eat pease-brose," said Tibbie; "a' the Scotch doctors wad tell ye that for a consideration, but I'll tell ye wi'out one. There's na cookin' to it; but when I infuse the tea I pour boiling water into a bowl an' stir up the meal wi' a bit o' salt till it's smooth as satin, an' then ye'll sup it wi' milk. Ye can eat it frae a saucer; but ye should eat it frae a bowl an' a cup o' milk handy. A spoonful o' brose an' a sup o' milk, that's the true way."

"I don't think I'd like it," said I. "I don't like any sort of porridge."

"That's a verra wrong feelin', then," said Tibbie. "Ye maun just conquer it. Like the Syrian captain, ye maun hae som' gran' physic ; ye'll no tak' the wash an' be clean."

"Well, I will try it perhaps sometime," said I ; "but I don't believe our grocer keeps it."

"I ken weel that he does not," said Tibbie, proudly ; "it's sold by naebody but just John McIntire, Scottish grocer, in the city. Shall I send to-day for a tin can o' it?"

"We can't to-day. Mr. Burroughs has gone, and —"

Tibbie made a sudden rush out of the kitchen door, and returned in a moment, panting, breathless, but content.

"I just caught the express," she said, "an' sent for the pease meal."

The next morning at breakfast the pease-brose was set before us, hot and smooth.

"What is this?" said Allan, as Tibbie placed a saucerful before him.

He tasted it and raised his eyebrows. "You can take it away," said he ; "I don't like it."

"Nor I," said I. I could n't eat it.

"I don' like it," said little Elinor, shivering and "making a mouth;" "it's nas'y."

"It's a pity ye don't tak' kindly to it," said Tibbie. "Ye maun just buckle down to it till ye do; it's for ye'r good. As Paul said tae Timothy, who was in like case wi' ye, tak' it for ye'r often infirmities."

Tibbie stood by Elinor's chair. "Open ye'r mouth, Elinor!"

"I don' want it; it's nas'y," said the child, shutting her little mouth tight.

"Come, lassie, be a braw Lowland lass; we'll nae eat oats like the ponies an' the Hielanders."

Thus adjured, Elinor opened her mouth, and by dint of coaxing Tibbie fed her the whole saucerful.

"There," she cried in triumph to me, "ye see hoo it was done, line upon line; by the time ye've eat it a week or twa, ye'll no sorrow that I was firm wi' ye."

Allan and I exchanged smiles, tempered with fear, and well might we, for the pease-brose appeared upon the breakfast-table the next morning, and so on for a week, while Tibbie stood by never wavering.

"I've a funny little story to tell you about Tibbie," said I, as we settled down comfortably in the parlor one evening.

"Nothing about pease-brose, is it?" asked Allan.

"No, it's about the Giant's Causeway. Tibbie was visiting some friends who promised to take her to see a wonderful sight. They told her of a little chain-bridge which crossed from the mainland, — a bridge about twenty feet above the water. No one, so it was said, had ever crossed this bridge, which was built, Tibbie says, simply to show how contemptible are the works of man beside those of God. Every one went by boat, — the offer of a china tea-set by the old woman on the island not having tempted any one to walk over it. The chains run cross-wise, and the bridge is very narrow. Well, Tibbie announced to Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Tulloch that she should walk across. Mrs. Mann offered her ten shillings if she would n't go, but she would."

"I believe it," said Allan.

"Mrs. Mann and her sister were rowed over in a boat, and they kept as nearly as they could under the bridge, expecting every minute that Tibbie would fall through. Mrs. Mann carried Tibbie's shoes and a pair of stockings, for Tibbie had to go, if go she would, in her stocking feet, that her feet might cling to the chains. She says that when she got half-way there, — it's a mile across, — she'd a mind to drop through, but she just grit her teeth and kept on."

“I ’ll warrant she did,” said Allan.

“And when the painful walk was over, her feet were sore beyond measure, so that she had to put them in a hot bath, which the old woman who had charge of the place gave her. Just think of a walk of a mile on swaying chains in stocking feet! She has the stuff in her that makes martyrs.”

“Yes,” said Allan, “or the stuff that makes martyrs of other people.”

“She said it was a lovely place where she landed, — a whitewashed stone cottage with a thatched roof, and a lovely garden full of pansies, and what she called ‘piano-roses,’ but which were peonies, I imagine. Inside, the beds were in the wall like berths, with checked linen curtains of blue and white before them, and — ”

“Did she get the china?” asked Allan.

“No,” said I, “not all of it, because she could n’t walk back; but the old woman gave her a cream-jug and a cup and saucer, all gilded, for the walk she did take. And the old woman wore a big ruffled cap, with the ruffles edged with lace, and — ”

Allan had been thinking. “Mary,” said he, “don’t balk any more about that pease-brose. We’ve got to eat it, that’s plain; and so the sooner we buckle down to it the better. I ’ll eat mine like a little lamb

to-morrow if you will. I feel powerless in Tibbie's hands."

"Well, I will," said I. "I asked Mr. Campbell about it, and he said it was excellent food ; and really, Allan, it begins to have a nutty sweetness to me, — a taste as of roasted chestnuts."

We looked at each other and laughed. And so the pease-brose took its place in the family circle.

XIV.

THERE was to be a temperance convention in our town. The ladies of the village had been from house to house to stir up the people's minds, and to ask gifts of cake and cold meat for the great collation in the hall. They evidently thought that the most agreeable way of disposing of the evil of intemperance would be for all to rise up and "squinch it," as Tibbie would say, in one day.

Two days before the convention, one of the ladies who was on the committee for selecting speakers came to tell me that their principal speaker, Mr. Crittenden Brown, had been called away from home to Ohio to his old father's death-bed.

"What shall we do? Do you know of any one we could get?" she asked me in despair.

I wished I could help her; but I did n't know a single temperance lecturer.

That evening, after being lost in thought for some time, I cried triumphantly to Allan, who was, by aid

of the evening paper, attending the prison convention, "Why would n't Cousin Edward do?"

"For what position do you propose him?" asked Allan, looking over the top of his paper.

"Why, to make the first speech at the temperance meeting, of course."

"Does he make temperance speeches?" asked Allan.

"He can," I replied; "you know he is very decided on that question, and he has a great talent for public speaking. Why are n't you more interested, Allan? If we are going to live in this town we must interest ourselves in its affairs, and be willing to exert ourselves for its good."

"But this is exerting your cousin," he said.

"Well, I shall ask him," I said; and I at once wrote as follows:—

"DEAR COUSIN EDWARD,—I know several things about you. I know you are a very busy man; but I know you are a very kind man; and I know you are a good temperance man. Will you not come and help us by speaking at our temperance convention? Do not say no. Gough is dead and Jerry McAuley is dead —"

"He knows they are 'dead,'" said Allan, impolitely reading over my shoulder. "Why not go on and tell him Washington is dead, William Penn is dead —"

"Don't be too funny," said I; "I was only going to say that all the great lecturers were dead, and that therefore he would have to come."

The lady who had been so troubled about the speaker was delighted when I told her that my cousin, Mr. Edward Rollins, would come, for I had received a favorable reply from him.

The evening came. I had a fine dinner prepared, to be on the table at half-past six o'clock, when Edward would be there. He did not come. He came in the seven o'clock train; the meeting was to open at eight. My cousin hardly touched my nice dinner; but Allan did, just as if it were a tribute to him.

"Are you nervous before speaking, Cousin Edward," I asked, "that you can't taste your dinner?"

"Oh, no," said he; "but I have been very busy to-day, unusually busy. I had a large mail to get off by to-day's steamer, and I am tired and have a bad headache; but that will pass off."

"The excitement of speaking will cure it," I said.

"It would be better to cure it before speaking," said Allan. "Give him some red pepper with boiling water poured on it; that always helps me."

"Or a little baking soda," said I, — "a salt-spoonful in cold water, that is good; or a cup of hot tea without milk or sugar."

We tried everything on him, but we saw him get paler and paler.

"Mary," said he, "if you will excuse me I'll lie down for a few minutes and get a nap. That will make me entirely well; it always does."

A nap! why, in twenty-five minutes the exercises would begin.

At last it was arranged that Allan should go alone to the hall and say that Mr. Rollins had been unexpectedly delayed for a short time. I would come with Edward after the nap.

So Allan reluctantly went off alone. I bathed my cousin's brow with peppermint and laudanum. I should have given him a little dose of brandy but that it seemed so inappropriate a remedy just then. I put hot flannels on his head, vinegar and water, and cologne. I put a mustard paste on the back of his neck. He thought then he could sleep. I went back to him at quarter after eight. Now he must go.

"My dear Mary," said he, struggling to open his eyes, "temperance or no temperance, I can never speak to-night, *never*; no, not to save my life!"

I saw that he could n't. I had had just such headaches, when husband, children, and life counted for nothing in the present sickening pain.

"Then I think I'll go and take Tibbie with me," said I, "for something must be done."

"Do," he said, as he turned with a groan upon his pillow.

It was half-past eight when I got to the hall. I sat down near the door and looked about for some one to carry a message to my husband. A little girl, a pert little girl in white with a blue ribbon on her shoulder, was reciting a "poem," every verse ending, "To help the cause along." It seemed to be a sneer at me. A gentleman on the platform rose and said, "We have been informed that Mr. Edward Rollins, who is to address us, has been detained for a short season."

There was a long silence. The ticking of the great clock over the door grew painfully loud. At last Allan gave out the number of a hymn, and while the audience were singing he came down the aisle. Tibbie and I slipped out and waited for him in the vestibule.

"Well, Mary," said he, "where in the world is Edward? I have been sitting on needles and pins. I gave out a good long hymn, but they're in the third verse already. It's the only time I ever heard an audience sing too fast. Will Edward be here soon?" And Allan took out his watch.

"He is positively sick," I said. "He just cannot

come. They must get on as best they may. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped."

Allan scribbled a note to the president and sent it up by a small boy. Then he went home to see if Edward needed a doctor, and Tibbie and I entered the hall again.

It made me shiver as I sat there and heard the audience swinging rapidly along through the seventh and last verse of the hymn, to think what would happen when silence came again. Here had half a dozen ladies been planning for this evening as the grand climax of the convention ; and the speaker had been specially imported from the city for the occasion, and the president had already told the audience of the "rich treat" before them, and expectation was on tiptoe, and —

The end of the hymn was reached. The people settled themselves in their seats and prepared to listen. That dreadful clock began again to tick louder and louder.

"I am exceedingly sorry to say," said the president, rising slowly, "that Mr. Rollins, the brilliant temperance speaker who was to have charmed you this evening, is suffering from a serious attack of sickness, and will not be able to be with us. Eloquent gentlemen are present, however," he continued, looking round

upon the speakers who figured on the programme as "and others," "who will fill his place ; and I am sure that in this audience there must be some who, if unaccustomed to public speaking, have yet words of moment to say to us on this vital subject."

He turned toward one of the auxiliary speakers on the platform, intending to introduce him, when suddenly a volunteer in the audience, acting upon the hint with which the president had closed, rose with unexpected promptness to his feet. He was not far from me ; and I recognized him at once as Tim Macnamara, a poor waif who, about a year before, had drifted into the quiet haven of our church, and since that time had attended every service, and always sat as quiet as a statue.

"Ladies and jintlemin," he began, waving his hand toward the respectable middle-aged people who composed the audience, — "ladies and jintlemin, I want to warn ye not to go into any of thim painted-up eatin'-houses, with lights with colored red glass on thim, and that says on thim, 'Ladies' and Jints' Oyster-Saloons.' No, ladies and jintlemin, ye'll find there whiskey and bad rum and bad words and fightin', in place of the oysters ye're lookin' for, and in the winders ye'll see long bottles a-lyin' on their sides ; and that's the way thim lies that dhrinks what's in 'em."

Our minister, who sat a little in front of him, moved uneasily in his seat, and began to turn the leaves of his hymn-book. This did not seem exactly the kind of speech which the occasion called for ; but Macnamara, quite unconscious of the sensation he was producing, went on, —

“ Sure it’s mesilf that knows that same ; for ivery night for many a long day I was into thim places an’ was turned out in the strate whin me money was gone an’ whin me head was addled with the dhrink, an’ me legs faltherin’ under me. An’ what with dhrink, an’ losin’ me work through that same, an’ all me frinds turnin’ their backs on me, sure it was sthraight to ruination I was goin’ whin, glory be to God ! I come to this place. I am that j’yful to-night that I can’t kape me sate, nor kape me tongue still in me jaws. Oh, manny’s the time I’ve sung the song (ye all know it), ‘ I ’m the happiest Paddy out ; ’ but to-night I can sing it with quite a different manin’. Thank the Lord, I ’m a new man, clane widin and widout ! Indade, to-night as I was a-puttin’ on the blue necktie which me Sunday-school teacher give me Christmas, an’ I a-lookin’ in the glass, says I to mesilf, ‘ Mac, ye ’ll have to be introduced to yersilf, man.’ ”

“ Now I must tell ye of the great elevation that’s come to me. Ye all know that there was a timper-

ance meetin' held here less nor a year ago by the Y. M. C. A. I was dragged in here that night by a man that was half dhrunk, as I war mesilf. It was all lighted up here, an' we thought it was one of thim fine dhrinkin'-saloons like thim on the Bowery. So I was overcome, an' sat me down on a settee by the door.

"Thin a man got up just in front of me, an' he puts his hand on me head an' he asked God to take me an' make something out of me. Says I aloud to mesilf an' to the man that fetched me in, says I, 'He can't do it.' Says the man who was spakin', — it was D'acon Mason, who is sittin' in the front sate now on the lift, — says he, 'If the Lord made ye, ye poor cretur, an innocent baby,' says he, 'he can make ye over as good as new, can't he?' says he. 'Well, then, I'm agreed,' says I, 'an' why don't he?' Says he, 'Ask him, thin.' 'Lord,' says I, 'make me as good as new!'

"After the meetin', for ye must mind it war a timperance meetin' an' not a saloon at all, D'acon Mason tuck me to a dacent lodgin' an' give me a bed that night, an' had me all freshened up in some of his own clo'es, — these are some of his clo'es, ladies and jintlemin" (he held up his arms), — "and after I got me breakfast, says I, 'What's the matter wid me? I'm

cravin' a dhrink of water, and I don't want no stronger dhrink,' says I. Says D'acon Mason, 'You're clothed an' in ye'r right mind,' says he; and so I was. In thim days I did n't know much, only whin D'acon Mason asked me wud I like to start fresh, I thought I'd just like to throw me old self away entirely, old clo'es and all.

"Thin the minister tuck me and taught me of the love of God; an' a lady in Sunday-school, — Miss Lamson it was, the lady in the third sate with the red ribbon in her hat, — says she, 'Put away ye'r sin from ye, and Jesus will be your friend and brother,' says she.

"Says I, 'I never had a brother, but I know what that manes; he'd walk wid me and talk wid me and sup and slape wid me.'

"Says she, 'The Lord Jesus will be always wid ye; but be careful,' says she, 'not to get into no bad places; for, sure, ye wud n't drag him into no low places to grieve him, nor wud ye lave him alone on the sidewalk while ye wint in.'

"Says I, 'I'll not, while breath is in me.'

"Says she, 'Jesus is not like your brother in bein' sinful like yersilf, but he'll make yer pure like himsilf if ye'll talk wid him an' then rade the Bible to get his answers; for that book,' says she, 'was writ for

you, Macnamara, as much as if ye was the only man in the world.'

"But last week I just wanted to go and see the man that kapes the place I used often to get dhrink in, and who 'd give me the loan of his sidewalk afterward. So I wint down and wint in, afther sayin' a prayer first. It was in the mornin', an' there was nobody ilse there ; so I wint up to him quite bowld. 'How do ye do, Misther O'Brien?' says I. Then I see he did n't know me, — it was sort o' dark in the basement, — an' says I, 'Have ye seen a man round lately by the name o' Macnamara?'

"Says he, 'No, I guess the fillow 's tuck up, or is dead ; but it's small matter, for he was good for naught and nothin',' says he.

"'Did he dhrink?' says I.

"'He did,' says he ; 'he was always dhrunk.'

"Thin, forgittin' mesilf, says I, 'And if dhrink made me good for naught, why did ye fill me wid it?' says I.

"'Macnamara, man,' says he, 'this is not you?'

"Says I, lookin' him in the eye, 'It's mesilf.'

"Says he, 'Sit down, man, an' take somethin', an' tell me about your good luck, seein' as we are alone.'

"Thin, remimberin' what the tacher told me, says I,

quite quiet like, 'We're not alone ; there's one wid me,' says I.

"Thin he looked over his shoulder, scared, an' says he, 'Who's here?' kind o' whisperin' like.

"Says I, 'Some one that was n't ashamed to come in wid me, for he come to save sinners an' cares for 'em, — the one who has made me over, clane widin and widout. He's standin' here by your side an' lookin' at ye ; the Lord Jesus Christ is his name.'

"'Macnamara,' says he, 'ye scare me ; have yer lost yer wits?'

"'No,' says I, 'I've found 'em.'

"So I talked and told him all that had befell me ; and whin I came away I says, 'Now I've no grudge to ye, an' every day I'm askin' the Lord to lead ye out of this place, an' he will.' An' I come away leavin' him starin'. But me tacher said I was so simple she was afeared to have me callin' round on me old friends ; so I was a-wonderin' what I could do for the Lord whin the home missionary jintleman came along.

"And now I'm to tell ye of the great elevation that's befell me. Ye remimber — of course ye do — the missionary jintleman from out Wist that prached before ye, a wake last Sunday. Ye know he told about the poor cratures that's a-comin' all the time

from across the says to sittle near him, till they are quite thick under his fate. Well, that avenin' I wint an' talked to our minister and to the missionary jintleman, an' tould him I wanted to go out an' hilp him. Says I, 'I'll take care of your horse, an' shovel snow, an' I can scrub floors for your wife,' — for ye remimber he tould that his wife could git nobody to hilp her. An' says I, 'I can do some cookin',' — for, ladies and jintlemin, ye see I've been helper at hotels and board-in'-houses, an' I know well how to do housework. Says I to him, 'I've got clo'es enough to last me me lifetime, thanks to D'acon Mason an' his son an' his son-in-law, — so that will cost nothin'.'

"Now perhaps, ladies and jintlemin, ye think I'm not aqual to the work, but I'll just prove it to ye. Besides bein' helper in the hotels, I've been a deal about stables, an' I've taken care of race-horses, — for race-horses, ye mind, is very delicate an' needs great care. Why, ye've all heard of the Surrey Lass, the bay mare that tuck the prize at the Sheepshead-Bay race, three years gone, against the Black Prince. They'd heavy odds on her, ye mind. Well, lit me till ye," — his tone grew proud and he straightened himself up, — "well, I had charge entire of her whinver the trainer was away. She'd come to me quite jintle. Whin I'd say, 'Give us yer fut, Lass,' she'd

hold out her forefut like a dog an' rub her cheek on me, an' whining whin she hear me v'ice. Oh, she war a fine mare, slinder as a willer-wisp war she! Ah, ladies and jintlemin, all this time I war bein' fitted for the Lord's work, and niver did I know it.

"Now, ye see if I can go to the Wist wid the missionary jintleman next wake, what a foine space of time he'll have for prayin' an' prachin', an' me a-groomin' the horse an' a-shovellin' the snow. For mesilf, I can jist slip into any corner in a barn or a shed to say me own prayers. Thin, when the missionary sees any wretched cratur just good for naught, he can pint him at me, sayin', 'Yon once war dirtier an' drunkener an' wickeder nor you, an' look at him now, — by the love o' God, clane widin an' widout.' Thin the cost of me kapin' will be small, through me appetite bein' but moderate, me havin' a wake stomach. And if I can go wid him, — and he's wantin' me, — it will kape me from fallin', kapin' close to him a-carryin' tracts round and the loike. Oh, and besides money for me kapin', I'd have to have money for me ticket out, — just out, for I'll bide forever whin I gits there. D'acon Mason, won't ye pass the box?"

Deacon Mason rose, and said that as our poor friend had been so anxious to go, and as he could

be of great service to the overworked missionary, the church had decided to send him; and that therefore there was no need of a collection, but that he hoped the good wishes and prayers of all who sympathized with one who had fought down his evil habits would go with him.

Poor Macnamara put his head down and burst into tears. "'Deed, D'acon Mason," said he, "I'll ne'er forgit ye dead or alive."

During the pause and rustle of conversation that followed the dramatic ending of poor Macnamara's speech, I slipped out of the hall and went home.

I found Cousin Edward in the parlor. His nap had completely cured his headache; he lay on the sofa and looked cheerful,—too cheerful.

"Well, now," said he, "if this next hour was the hour of the meeting, I could speak easily. I feel just in a speaking mood."

"It is too late now," said I, mournfully, "and everything went wrong. It was queer that you had such a headache to-night."

Allan hastened to say that no one ever urged a headache upon himself.

"It was certainly strange," said Cousin Edward; "and I've just thought of the cause. To-day, as I was hurrying along the street, I met a German gentle-

man who was very anxious to speak to me on a matter of business. I said I had n't one minute, but he was very urgent and almost forced me into a little restaurant near where we stood, saying, 'While we lunch we can talk.' He ordered a sandwich and lager beer. I had no time to wait till meat was cooked; I was warm, and the beer looked cool, and — well — I took a glass too."

"Lager beer?" I asked grimly.

"Yes; I really have n't tasted a glass in sixteen years before, and it entirely upset me. I don't think I ever had a worse headache in my life; it must have been that."

So my temperance lecturer had been drinking! "Well, well, well," thought I, "this is a strange world! I don't care if his old head does ache. Not to drink for sixteen years, and then to spoil my convention!"

I put this thought in words when I was in my room with Allan.

Said he, "You ought to be glad it made his head ache, because it will be a lesson to him, and raise him to an honored manhood. I'm sure you treated him very well; that was a good dinner. But it's always the way with prodigal sons. Till the dinner came on the table, I must confess that I regretted that fine

brown turkey that I saw you sending off to the temperance convention this morning. But virtue was rewarded ; for I, the saint, ate up the dinner that was cooked for your sinner."

It made me quite angry the next morning, when my relative — he was only a married-on relative — bade us good-by, thanking me for my kind care, and saying the night's sleep in the country had quite refreshed him, and went cheerfully away, holding his silk umbrella, like a cane, by its silver handle, and turning occasionally to shake it back at Elinor, who was watching him from the parlor window. I wanted to shake my fist at him.

I felt injured all day. I felt depressed, as if I kept an Inebriate's Home, or a lager-beer saloon.

What the convention accomplished we could not know, of course ; but when the best is done that one can do, there it must be left.

Two years passed after the unusual temperance meeting, and Macnamara had almost faded from my memory, when one evening "D'acon Mason" called on us, and after speaking of that memorable occasion, showed us a letter from the missionary with whom Macnamara had volunteered to act as an assistant in practical Christianity. This was what he said about the warm-hearted Irishman : —

“After Macnamara’s coming to us, life put on a new face. He at once took the heavy housework from my feeble wife, going at it with such enthusiasm that it was a pleasure to see him about. My boys followed him around from morning till night,—his sweet temper and merry ways, his whistling and feats of jumping making him an engaging comrade. I watched him carefully, knowing that he had been picked out of a slough, but never did I know of a low word or act. He was, as he often said, ‘clane widin and widout.’ He seemed overwhelmed with gratitude for a home and kind friends, and never seemed satisfied that he had done enough for us.

“Last Winter one of our poor neighbors on the prairie died, and his wife and child were thrown upon me to support until we could hear from their friends in England. Poor Mac, as we called him, rose to be a hero. He got odd jobs in the village; he stinted himself of his food, till I stopped that; and in every way he tried through the Winter to save and earn, that the burden might not fall too heavily on me, nor the care on my wife. The baby was a sickly little thing, and often he would walk the floor with it at night, up and down the little sitting-room, to give its mother rest. We all loved the poor fellow; I cannot tell you how much we loved him.

“In the Spring, the woman went back to England; and then we began to notice that Mac did not seem as strong as before. He had a hacking cough, and a color in his cheeks that alarmed me. We tried to save him in every way; but it was of no use, work he would. We sometimes cheated ourselves into the belief that he was suffering from a heavy cold. Just a week ago, one morning, he

did not come down to make the kitchen fire, and I went to his room. He lay quietly, with his cheek upon his hand, in that deep rest which must come to all of us.

“I can assure you there was grief and sincere sorrow in our house that day, and ever since. I thought the boys would break their very hearts over their loss; and as for me and my wife, we know that we shall never see in this world a purer, nobler, more devoted soul than Macnamara, nor can we meet with a greater loss until our own family is divided by death.”

XV.

AT last we were settled in our little seashore house again. All sweet and cheerful it was, with fresh cream-colored paper and paint. I feel almost equal to a crusade against dark paint and paper. A dark, sunless room and a light, sunny one lower or raise my spirits as quickly as a change of weather affects the little woman in the barometer.

The fire was kindled again upon our hearth, — for we always have a little fire, just for the sake of its cheery company, whenever the days are cool enough to furnish the least pretext; the very breeze we left there the Summer before came with its greeting through doors and windows; the blue bay lay in peaceful beauty, — it was all there. When the curtains should be hung and the rugs laid down, we could say, — we always do, — “This is last Summer.”

And now Pauline was to come to visit us. She was coming from the mountains, where she had been with a party of artists for a month or two. Though the house was in order, I knew I should feel unsettled till

she got there ; for nearly every cottage at the "Open Sea," a mile away, had an artist for a guest, and as yet I had none. Sketching-umbrellas were thick as toadstools in the village, and I wanted an artist to set forth from my cottage too, every day, with a big umbrella and a stool, and settle down in the field, or by the seaside, as if making a morning call on Nature.

Now, our town might become immortal through me, by means of her. Its byways and hedges might shine on the Exhibition walls that year ; and even our own portraits, in her sketches, might hang upon the walls of the great.

I knew the very places for Pauline to sketch. There was Mrs. Mason's old low, straggling house on the corner, with its weather-stained sheds stuck on here and there, as if all the sheds that had no object in life had just drifted up and stranded there. The sheds were vine-covered, and about the roofs flocks of white pigeons were always hovering. Mrs. Mason must come out too, with her blue apron filled with corn, to feed the pigeons. Then the winding road and the willows and the peep of bay, — ah, everything was there that ought to be there.

And then, I wanted Pauline to paint Mrs. Darling's big pink pitcher, crowded full of "bouncing Bets," and grasses. Pauline almost paints the fragrance into her

flowers. The bouncing Bets are sweet as honey, and every shade of pink lives in them. I knew one thing : I would n't call that picture — Heaven forbid ! — “A Symphony in Pink !” We would just call it its true name, “Aunt Betsey's Posies.”

I have still another picture that I saw in my room only last night, that I want Pauline to paint some day : Elinor's little old shoes thrown down by her red stockings, and a great handful of withered flowers, — the last harvest of her little day. “The Reaper's Work is Done,” I shall name that. Pauline will sell it to the first mother that walks into the Exhibition ; and she'll have to paint at least half a dozen copies for the mothers that will want to buy it.

So the afternoon came that was to bring Pauline. Allan and I drove to the station, seven miles away, to meet her. Halfway there, we found a brown velvet coat in the road. Neither of us wanted a velvet coat, but of course we picked it up. The pockets were empty. I said it was a good coat, and after a little brushing, we could lay it away with Uncle Joseph's vest and the “and so forths ;” but we must try to find its owner first.

“I wonder whose mantle it can be,” said Allan ; “I should be afraid to put it on.”

Six ladies got out of the train, but no Pauline.

Strange ; this was n't like Pauline ; but then people are continually doing things unlike themselves.

There was nothing to be done but to go home. During the last half-hour of our drive the wind rose, and black clouds covered the sky ; later the rain came pouring down. When we reached the house, I ran as fast as I could from the carriage into my little parlor, while Allan drove off with the horse.

There, in my own special chair, beside a bright fire which had not been lighted when we went out, sat a young man reading my magazine. I knew how the big bear felt when he saw Silver Hair. The young man sprang to his feet. He said he had ventured to take refuge in my cottage, as he had been caught in the rain without an umbrella, and was a mile from the "Open Sea," where he was staying ; and that my maid had kindly lighted the fire. His name, he told me, was David Wilson. Before long Allan appeared, and soon after that tea was on the table. As the rain was still pouring, we took our guest out to tea. We told him of our fruitless errand, — that we had gone to fetch a beautiful young lady home, and had only come back with a velveteen coat with no money in the pockets, that we had found in the road.

"It must be my coat," said he ; and, sure enough, when Mary brought it from my bundle of shawls it

proved to be his coat, which he had lost from a carriage that very afternoon. It was funny that while we were bringing the coat to its owner the owner had come to his coat. "It was like Bo-peep and her sheep's tails," said little Douglas.

But I was anxious about Pauline. What if she had missed her train and should come on the four o'clock train and arrive after dark and get lost?

"I'll warrant Pauline will manage," said Allan. "In all probability, however, she will wait till the train to-morrow, and we'll drive over for her again."

About an hour after this Mr. Wilson departed with his velveteen coat, and sheltered under my umbrella. Half-past eight. "No Pauline to-night," we said. It was nearly nine o'clock when the sound of wheels roused me from the book I was reading. It was still raining.

"Hark ! yes, that is the stage ! it has stopped. Put a light in the window, — no, hold it in the doorway ! It's Pauline's voice. Leave the trunk on the piazza ! Allan, take the bag ! So you are here at last, Pauline ! What was the matter ? Did you lose the train ?"

"Oh, let her have something to eat before she says anything," said Allan. He pulled a little table to the fire. Mary soon brought in a tray with a hot supper.

I lighted new candles in the tall silver candlesticks. Allan poked the fire till it flamed and crackled.

"Now eat and drink," said I; "but bite as fast as you can and remain a lady, for I am waiting to hear. How came the stage to be so late?"

Pauline stood before the fire warming her hands. How pretty she looked! I was proud of my little cousin.

"Before I taste my supper," said she, "I must tell my adventure. I missed my train this afternoon, and had to come down in this late one. I remembered you told me that you lived at the Bay, so I thought it would be easy enough to find you. The driver said your cottage was near the hotel. He dropped passengers here and there at little cottages and cross-roads, and then coursed on till he came through the darkness to a lighted hotel. Then he said he had made a mistake, and that your cottage was a mile away; but he said he would bring me here as soon as he had eaten his supper. He said he had n't had time to get a mouthful since noon, and it seemed only reasonable that he should want his supper, at eight o'clock. He had to take off my trunk to get at another one, and he set it on the piazza. I went into the parlor to wait.

"After I'd waited about three-quarters of an hour,

I went to the office to inquire about him, and, behold, the clerk said the stage-driver had gone ! ‘ I guess he must have forgotten you,’ he said ; and there I was, trunk and all. I was in despair. I did n’t want to drive round the country with some strange man, in the darkness and the rain, so I thought my best plan was to stay there all night, and find you in the morning.

“ When I asked for a room, the clerk said there was not a vacant one in the house. ‘ But I must have one,’ I said. Then he stepped out on the piazza, as if to consult his guiding star, and pretty soon came back to say that I could have the room of a young man who had gone across the Sound for the night. So up I went to take off my hat, and stood in the middle of the room, feeling like a perfect intruder, with the young man’s things scattered all about the room, when a rap came on the door, and I opened it to behold a handsome young man. Of course I thought it was the one who owned the room, come to turn me out ; but, no, he said he had come to take me to my cousins ; that you expected me this afternoon, and were not looking for me to-night. He said the stage had gone, but that there was a little ‘ barge ’ at the door which was going to the village, and that he would take me to your door safely. He

helped me on with my sack, took my bag, and escorted me to the barge, — one of Cleopatra's, I suppose, — and got in with me, and landed me safely here. He said he had left your cottage only an hour ago. Now, Mary, who is that young man?"

Then I told Pauline all I knew of her Mercury. "How soon virtue is rewarded," said I, "and in what overflowing measure it has come to me! I find an old velvetten coat for him, and he finds Pauline for me. What can I do for him? I'll give him that umbrella he borrowed."

"Perhaps he'd rather have Pauline," said Allan.

Pauline laughed. "No lover for me," she said; "hard cash is what I want."

"Pauline, you are not engaged to a rich old man, are you," said I, gazing sternly at her, as Allan went out to look after her trunk, — "some forlorn, glass-eyed, false old man, just to get to Europe?"

"Mercy, no, Mary! But I have had an offer, — my second. The first was a young man who kept an apothecary's shop in our town. One day I went in there, — I'd been, of course, dozens of times before; he went to the same church too. I bought a hair-brush and comb, and he insisted on not taking any pay for them. I just laid down the money and walked out of the shop very stiffly. The next day I got a let-

ter from him in a blue-lined envelope, with an offer of marriage."

"And this one, Pauline?"

"Well, this one was from a little pale Episcopal minister, with a big head and curly hair, — a widower, with a little girl about seven, and small twins. Think of it! I heard he had had six churches."

"All at once?"

"No, he had moved six times. Now, I like to travel," said Pauline; "but I would n't care to take my furniture and the twins every time. Miss Wilder said if I married him I'd have to have my wedding-presents put on casters! I did n't care a scrap for him, but I've felt like a mean sneak ever since, because he did need some one dreadfully to straighten out his affairs, and I know I could have done it beautifully. I can't get over the look of that poor child of his, who came to church with her dress buttoned in front instead of behind. It made the sleeves backside front, and a perfect fright of her; and she was a cunning little soul too. I suppose her father dressed her, poor man. I see that I am destined to be like that girl who had twenty offers, but all of them ineligible."

After Pauline had had her tea, we sat round the fire till it died away, and talked, while the rain still fell.

Then I took Pauline upstairs to introduce her to her little room. It was a pleasant room, with white curtains at the windows, a white-draped dressing-table, a queer little window opening on the stairway, and soft pink roses trailing over the paper, — printed roses, of course.

Then I repeated a good-night couplet adapted for Pauline, after the fashion of a lady we had heard of, who always repeated one at night at the doors of her guests' rooms, —

“Stranger, sleep, thy car-fare o’er ;
Sleep the sleep that knows no waking.”

The next day Mr. Wilson came to return the umbrella. Dear me, how things do turn out ! he was an artist too, it seemed, and he had lived four years abroad. Poor little Pauline looked envious when she heard that.

He sat on the piazza for an hour to get acquainted. As there was no one to do it for us, we told him who we were, and he told us who he was. His grandfather was Scotch, and so was ours, — delightful coincidence ! We asked him if his grandfather was a “V. P.” or Free Church. Our grandfather was of the State Church ; so was his (he said). He had an aunt who lived in Essex County, Massachusetts, and we had an uncle in Suffolk County.

Then we took a turn at books. Pauline said she never felt really introduced to any one who had not read "Cousin Phillis" and "The Village on the Cliff." He said he would send for them that day.

"And 'Posson Jone' too," said I. "I never invite any one to dinner who does not read and love 'Posson Jone'."

He added that to his list.

"I would n't stand that," said Allan, who sat with his paper at the window that opened on the piazza. "You can't tell where those two women will lead you. They'll put Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress,' or Cruden's Concordance on your list next, or Townsend's 'Arrangement,' or — or Blunt's 'Coincidences;' they have n't read them, but they'll pretend they have. The titles of books that they know from their grandfather's library are enough to make one shudder."

But the young man did n't seem troubled.

One morning he came to show us a lot of his sketches that he had sent for. They were really beautiful. He rose in Pauline's estimation as the mercury rises when one lays a warm finger on the glass.

He showed us a capital sketch of an old Yankee skipper, Captain Millets. He said some of his friends were very anxious to go to the little seashore town

where the captain's wife took boarders ; but warned by the experience of some who went the Summer before, they stipulated for a private table, the old captain being such an incessant talker that the boarders were fairly exhausted, rather than refreshed, after each meal.

The evening they arrived (they were a party of young men) they were very merry, and were made merrier by hearing a smothered laugh follow each little joke or story. The laugh seemed to proceed from a closet in the dining-room, the door of which was ajar. They found out afterward that the old gentleman whom they had defrauded of their society at table took his meals at the same hour from a shelf in the "buttry," as he called it, from which retreat he could hear every word they said.

They pretended not to know that he was there, and one would say, "I must ask Captain Millets what time I must be off for the fishing to-morrow," when at once a disembodied voice would announce, "Half-past four sharp, and bait fixed over night."

Some one said one morning that the drive must be given up, as the sorrel horse was sick. "He's dead," said the voice, "died this mornin'. They gin him camphire ; they had n't ought to gin him camphire."

Another day one of them said, "There go those

three old maids I told you of, — ‘Trypheny’ and ‘Tryphosy,’ and — I don’t know the third one’s name.” Said the voice, “’T ought a been Tryagin, but it is ‘Malviny.’”

Sometimes the captain stood so close to the closet door, in his eagerness to catch every word, that they could hear him breathe. There was something irresistibly funny in the dead silence that reigned when they wickedly lowered their voices as they neared the point of some exciting tale.

When Mr. Wilson asked the captain to sit for him, he was overjoyed, and came in half an hour afterward, in his Sunday clothes, his hair all plastered down with water, and his face polished by the use of soap-suds and a crash towel.

“I meant to paint him,” said Mr. Wilson, “in his every-day clothes, whittling out a boat, or tipped back in a chair reading his paper; but when I saw him, I put him right in, polish and all, and called the sketch ‘Ready for his Second Courting.’”

“Delightful!” said I; “if we don’t go abroad next Summer, Pauline, we must go there.”

We praised his sketches, every one, for they were charming.

“I’ll tell you what they remind me of,” I said, holding one off at arm’s length, — “the modern

Spanish pictures that I saw in Paris. I shall never forget one exquisite little Rico, full as it could be of sunshine and air and breezes, — a little living minute caught upon the paper.”

Mr. Wilson seemed to find our town a region full of inspiration ; he stayed on through the whole Summer, and as we knew him better we admired still more his talent as an artist and liked him as a friend.

Now I might well feel elated. I owned two artists, two sketching-umbrellas, and two stools ; and it seemed sometimes as if we were also to have two hearts that beat as one, for somehow it happened that David Wilson joined all our parties. We walked, we drove together, and he and Pauline sketched.

The last drive we took that Summer was an eventful one. We set off in an open beach-wagon for Lake Misconet, miles away, the artists taking all their “paraphernalia” along. We were to stop at any symptom of inspiration and give them a chance to put their thoughts on paper. Five or six miles from home we turned into a charming wood-road, according to my direction, and after a mile or two came to a queer little weather-stained cottage and to the end of the road.

“To think of owning the end of a road !” said Pauline, — “a road full of trees and light and shade as

thick as leaves, and birds and squirrels for neighbors and company !”

It was a lovely spot, — a little clearing of an acre or two, with a low cottage standing close to the road, a little turnstile set in the rickety lichen-tinted fence, a millstone for a doorstep, the yard full of bouncing Bets, and cypress-weed with its evil color and rank growth of slimy stem creeping beyond the yard out into the ruts of the road. Not a soul appeared to be about the place. It was evidently a deserted house.

“We are wrong,” said I ; “we should have taken the road toward the left.”

“No matter,” cried Pauline ; “our souls guided us here, for I feel inspired.”

“So do I,” cried Mr. Wilson.

“Have you noticed,” said Allan to me in a low tone, “that your new friend always seems inspired when Pauline does?”

Noticed it ! anybody who was not blind must have seen it. But I only said, “Why? Have you? Do you think he is interested in her?”

“Well, I thought so to-day. It crossed my mind for the first time yesterday.”

“Allan,” said I, in a whisper, “don’t tell Pauline that I told you, but she has had an offer this Summer from an Episcopal clergyman.”

"Whew ! was he a bishop ?" said Allan. "Did she accept him ?"

"She has n't yet," said I.

Mr. Wilson had already set up his easel, and was preparing to sketch. Pauline stood near him.

"Come, Pauline," said I, "let us peep into the windows of the deserted house ; how solemn it seems, this dead home, in all the sunlight of the Summer !"

Through one window we saw a big fireplace blackened by the smoke of many years ; bricks lay here and there on the floor, as they had fallen from the chimney. In the middle of the room stood two high-backed rush-bottomed chairs facing each other. In the other front room stood a red bedstead, with a ticking of straw on it and a comforter half on the floor. A chest of drawers was in one corner, from the open drawer of which hung a dark garment of some sort. On the hearth was a candlestick holding a half-burned candle. It all looked very dreary.

"This is a horrible sort of a deserted house," said I. "A deserted house should be empty. I can almost see two old ghosts hobnobbing in those chairs, and I believe they slept in this bed, and have been trying on the old people's clothes ; I only hope they have not put an end to the old people themselves. I believe they are looking at us through the windows now."

"Flattening their noses on the pane," said Allan, who had joined us; "let us go in. Have you ever called on a ghost; should we send cards?"

He pressed the iron latch, which yielded to his touch, and threw back the door.

"Oh, don't go in," said I.

"No," said Pauline. "I couldn't face a ghost in the sunlight; a ghost in the moonlight is natural and proper."

"Let us go up to that orchard on the hill," said I to Allan, thinking the artists would perhaps do as well if left by themselves.

Such old, worn-out apple-trees they were! The trunks looked like weather-beaten logs, all the bark hidden under patches of yellow and green lichen. They were too old and tired to stand straight. They stood knee-deep in grass, and seemed companionable and "folksy," leaning toward one another and whispering, — for what else was that sound among the leaves? — whispering of Springs and Autumns long gone, when blossoms were fairer than nowadays, and fruit was sweeter. Under one tree stood a broken bee-hive; apple-blossom honey those bees must have made, — food fit for the gods. The hive was sugar-loaf shape, like Dr. Watts' bee-hives, "where little Howdath used to live," said Allan.

"The artists must surely make a sketch of this orchard," I said, looking about on all its charming details.

I ought to have married an artist instead of a lawyer ; what a prize I should have been ! A bunch of weeds, a roadside shed, a bend in the road, I can spy their capabilities at once. I don't have to wait, as some people do, to see from a mountain-top all the kingdoms of the earth in a moment of time, and then cry out, "What a picture that would make !" — which same it would n't.

In a hollow near by there was a little old mill, one side of which had given up trying to stand any longer, — why should it, since the wheel had ceased to turn and the stones were idle ? Deep down in the ravine the dark lazy stream loitered, for its work too was over, and the wild grape-vines reached down to its cool brink, and turning back, climbed by the pine-trees on the bank into the sunshine and the wind.

When we came back what wonders our artist had wrought ! He had conjured up a little house on his paper, — a little house, already ancient, with roof lichen-grown, and bulging outside chimney, all built and old in sixty minutes. The sky was there too, and great drifts of cloud, and the abele-tree behind the house stretching far above the low roof.

As we told him about the orchard and the mill, he went on painting, bringing out from white chaos the well and the well-sweep, and causing the grass to spring fresh and green about the doorstep, as if he had rain and sunshine at his call.

"But the old man turning your 'grin'-s'n,'" asked Pauline, "where is he? and the old woman 'shooing the fowels,' where is she?"

"Oh, it doesn't need people," said Mr. Wilson. "I shall say on a little gilt tablet on the frame that he's gone to the Corner for groceries, and she's 'rode along of him' to — to —"

"To see Sophrony's baby," said I; "and really one can hardly believe this reason is not the true one. The old place does not seem like a deserted house in this cheerful light."

"No, it should have been sketched at dusk for a haunted house," said Pauline, "and just the faintest suspicion of a face at that window, — a ghost's face, — and called 'The Dead Home.'"

"But," she went on, "I like it best as it is, all sunshiny. I would like to get into the picture myself and live there."

I was turning away just at this moment to look for Allan; but as I went I thought I caught in earnest tones something like, — but no, I shall not tell even

what I thought I heard, — and when from a safe distance I looked round, the artist had dropped block and brushes, the loose sheets from his portfolio fluttered on the grass, and he and Pauline were disappearing in the wood-path that led to the old mill.

I went back and picked up his belongings ; that was only fair. It was their day ; I'd had mine. Allan was sitting on the well platform, sound asleep, and sleeping sweetly too, for his fingers were between the leaves of the "Forum," so that he knew he wasn't wasting his time.

It was a long time before the artists came back, with excuses about having been to look at the mill we had said they ought to sketch ; and it was growing late as we set out again to find the road to the lake. Fortunately, we had not gone very far out of our way, and a few miles brought us there.

The lake came up to my promise. It was dotted with well-wooded islands, and little sandy beaches broke the line of overhanging trees along its shore.

"Now," said Allan, "I will remark, as host, that this is the finest lake within a radius of twenty-five miles ; that it has seven islands, and is fourteen miles in circumference. How beautiful the reflection of the clouds in the water, — also of the trees ! It reminds me of Lucerne, where Tell didn't shoot the tyrant

Gessler. You may now feel easy, friends, my duty is done. Fall to, eat, and be merry !”

We stayed there till dusk, because we wanted to show Pauline how the moon looked in that town. Suddenly, as we were driving back, a chilly gust swept down upon us ; and while we were putting on our wraps, it grew very dark, a few drops fell, and then a shower pelted upon our unsheltered heads.

“Shall we drive on?” asked Allan. “We shall soon be drenched at this rate. There is no house till we reach the village.”

“Why not take shelter in our deserted house?” asked Mr. Wilson. “We are near that, and I think we are in for a real storm.”

“Oh, do,” cried Pauline ; “and we can burn up the ghosts’ chairs and bedsteads. Oh, let us go there ; and the fun of it too !”

In a little time we were entering the door which Pauline had declined to enter in the daylight. Mr. Wilson had matches.

“Here is the ghosts’ candle,” said Pauline ; “we can see by that to break up the furniture.”

But Mr. Wilson found some old boards, and soon built a blazing fire on the hearth.

“Still,” said Pauline, “keep an eye out. I feel as if the ghosts were in bed in the next room.”

Allan and Mr. Wilson went out to put the horses in the barn. The rain beat against the uncurtained windows; the dense darkness was only broken by the firelight flashing on the raindrops which beat and beat against the panes. The vines by the windows tapped and rattled on the glass; it would have been eerie enough, had we not expected our protectors back in a few minutes.

Pauline sprang up when they came in. "Oh," she cried in a pitying tone, looking at Mr. Wilson's wet coat, "how wet you are! You'll surely take cold; come near the fire."

Allan looked at me. "I am as wet as he is, and wetter too," he whispered; "but she doesn't worry about my coat. I bet on Wilson; do you bet on the Episcopal clergyman?"

Allan sat on a box, leaning his head against the wall, and under the combined influence of fatigue and the warmth of the fire, was beginning to doze. Pauline also had subsided in a corner; while I sat on one side of the fireplace talking with Mr. Wilson, who sat opposite me facing a door which led into a back room. The warmth was evidently affecting him too, and he had hard work to keep his eyes open. Suddenly, however, they opened very wide and stared at something over my shoulder.

“What is it?” said I, turning in the direction of the door.

“As sure as I’m alive,” said Mr. Wilson, “I saw the head of an old woman, in a nightcap, peep round the corner of those enclosed stairs that lead from that room.”

“Impossible,” said I; “you must have dreamed it.” He shook his head. Then we sat in perfect silence, watching the old stairs. A long time we looked, so long in fact that a smile was beginning to creep into my eyes, when before them flashed a glimpse of white,—it *was* an old woman’s head in a nightcap !

The faintest of retreating footsteps sounded on the stairs. We looked at each other blankly.

“Perhaps it is some one who has taken shelter here, like ourselves,” said he.

“But old ladies caught in unexpected tempests don’t have their nightcaps along,” said I.

“Perhaps she is the old woman out of the barometer,” said Mr. Wilson. After a few minutes came the faint footfall, and just as the old woman’s face appeared, Mr. Wilson and I stood up. As she saw us she gave such a scream of terror as I never heard before, and scampered up the stairs.

Allan and Pauline started to their feet. “Oh, what

is it?" they cried; and then they saw that we were laughing.

"We supposed we had seen a ghost," said I; "and it is a veritable old lady who came downstairs in night-gown and cap to peep at us."

"Who is she?" cried Pauline. "Have you asked her?"

"You speak to her," said Mr. Wilson to Pauline.

"Oh, when I thought it was a ghost," said I, "the most proper chill stole up my spine and froze my veins! I can write a ghost-story now."

"Don't be afraid," said Pauline, in a reassuring voice, as she stood at the foot of the stairs, "we are only some people from the Bay who were caught in the storm and came here for shelter. How did you come here?"

We heard a voice from above saying, "I ain't scared, seein' there is wimmin there; but you'd ought to have knocked. That wa'n't no way to walk into *my* house and make a fire out of *my* boards 'thout askin' me."

"You must excuse us," I added. "We were caught in the rain, miles from home, and we did n't know you lived here. We thought it was a deserted house."

"'T ain't no such thing," said the old woman, indig-

nantly ; “it’s a real good house. We’ve lived here forty years in comfort, and never seen a soul except the folks we knew that come a purpose to see us ; but now I sha’n’t take no more comfort, I shall be so afraid of tramps. When we come home to-day and found crumbs on the doorstep and see some loose papers round, I felt sort of skittish then.”

Soon the old woman appeared downstairs dressed. “Mercy on us !” said she, “an’ so you thought our house was deserted? Well, it was, sort of. We’ve been thinkin’ of repairin’ for some time along back ; and when Sarah’s baby come and I had to be there anyway, I said to father he’d better go too, and go back and forth to feed the cow. And then we thought it would be a good chance to repair, and so he and Sarah’s husband come about a week ago and carried the furniture all upstairs to get ready for the carpenter ; and then it was such a long way, ’bout five miles, for father to be going over, they just took the cow home to Sarah’s, and the hens. I knew things was n’t left right, because men-folks don’t know how, and I said I must come over this afternoon and see ; and we brought some cooked victuals so’s to stay over night, and we’re going back to-morrow. We’d just got asleep when you bust in the door and we woke up in a dreadful fright. Father he said I’d

better lay, but I could n't seem to ; but I was scared when I see that young man stand up as if he was goin' to ketch me."

"I don't wonder you were frightened," said I.

The old woman was very curious to know just who we were and our names. I explained to her as best I could.

"And these folks," said she, "who might they be? Is that your wife?" she asked, looking from Pauline to Mr. Wilson.

"Not yet," said the young man, coolly, smiling at Allan and me.

"Hush!" cried Pauline, reproachfully.

"Hello," said Allan, in a stage whisper to me, "I thought she was engaged to an Episcopal bishop!"

"She did n't tell me so," said Mr. Wilson, smiling and taking Pauline's hand. "I suppose I ought to have chosen a more formal time and way," he went on, "to ask your approval as your cousin's protectors, but the exigencies of the moment seem to be too much for me."

Well, we were not exactly surprised, but it did seem rather sudden. However, we really liked David Wilson, and we gave the young people our blessing, while the old woman looked on in some astonishment at the scene which was taking place in her unfrequented cottage.

The rain ceased about an hour after this, and we departed, greatly to the old woman's regret. We left some money with her to pay for "busting in the door," and for the fright we had given her.

I thought it was my duty, as a married woman, to have a little talk with Pauline on this important occasion, so I went to her room that very night. I seated myself in a little rocking-chair, and she sat before me taking out her hairpins, and shaking her curly hair about her.

"My dear," said I, "I feel it is my duty, now that you are engaged, to tell you that life is something besides play."

"Yes 'm," said Pauline, "so I've heard."

"Oh, yes, my dear," I went on, "the very best of men often have peculiarities which are hard to put up with; even Allan, who you know is perfect, had little ways one had to get used to, or—well, for instance, he comes always and complains if his stockings are rolled up in pairs in his drawer instead of being spread out one upon another, do you see?"

"If such a trial as that should come to me," said Pauline, "I should just give way under it; but I hope I sha'n't be called upon to bear it; yes 'm, I hope not."

"Don't laugh, Pauline! Listen; I knew a man

once who just would do one thing perfectly hateful, and only one. There was plenty of closet room in the house, and yet he *would* stand a pair of long-legged boots in the corner of his wife's dressing-room ; *would*, despite all she could say. What would you do in such a case as that ? ”

“ Paint them red and fill them with dried grasses,” she replied in her jaunty way.

“ I am not joking, you understand,” said I.

“ Yes 'm,” said she.

“ Then I knew a man who saved a girl from drowning. It was a very brave act and nearly cost him his life. Then he fell in love with her and married her ; but afterward he was very disagreeable about his coffee and his biscuits, though they were good enough, — I've tasted them, — and would run his hand over the banisters and show her the dust, and sniffed when the kerosene lamp was lighted in the library, as if it had a horrid smell, when it was exquisitely clean. How would you stand that ? Really a noble man, you know, who was simply uncomfortable to live with. What would you do in such a case ? ”

“ Fall down the well and get almost drowned every day just to keep his greatness uppermost,” said Pauline, flippantly. “ Yes 'm, that's what I'd do.”

The girl sat there in her white skirts and frilled

dressing-sack, her hair falling over her shoulders, her eyes shining with happiness.

"Well, good-night, my dear," said I, smiling at her, "pleasant dreams and every blessing!"

"Good-night, Molly," she said.

As soon as I had shut the door it flew open. Out she ran and caught me in her arms and kissed me.

"Oh, Molly dear, I am so happy," she said.

"You dear, dear, good little Pauline!" said I. "You deserve to be happy; you shall be happy; you will be happy; good-night."

David Wilson has no relatives. He says he wished to own us, — Allan and me and the children, — and marrying Pauline was the only way to do it. He has plenty of money left him by an aunt who was evidently a very "thoughtful" person; and they will be married in October and go at once to Europe.

There is no royal road to learning, we have all heard; but there is, it seems, a short cut to Europe.

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